THE NO.1 INTERNATIONAL FOOTBALL MAGAZINE

WORLD SOCCER

July 1998 £3.50

DENMARK DKR. 49.00
GREECE DRA. 1400.00
HOLLAND DFL. 11.95
ITALY L 7000.00
MALTA LM 2.50
SPAIN PTAS. 850.00
USA $ 5.95

The ultimate guide to France 98

Double issue

156 pages of
EXCLUSIVE interviews
EXPERT analysis
INSIDE stories

World Cup special

Everything you need to know about the greatest show on earth

SPEEDIMPEX USA, INC.

PRINTED IN ENGLAND

FRANCE 98 BUMPER ISSUE FRANCE 98 BUMPER ISSUE

FRANCE 98
OFFICIAL SPONSOR OF WORLD CUP FRANCE 98

photo
PRINCIPAL SPONSOR

"I'd just sunk a blinder on the 14th, when half of England pitched up."

Canon Sure Shot cameras are lightweight and packed with advanced features. And because there are over 10 models to choose from, you're sure to find one to suit your needs. Prices range from £59.99 to £259.99. Call 0800 616 417 for a brochure. Canon are pleased to be the sponsors of Team England.

YOU AND CANON CAN.

Canon Sure Shot. Because you won't get a second chance.

www.canon.co.uk

NO PUSSYCATS

No mercy. The English lions are about to invade France and storm the citadels of every World Cup venue. Celebrate the occasion with this superb coin cover from Benham - the First in First Day Covers. This cover will be postmarked from the locations of three qualifying games; Marseilles, Toulouse and Lens. It will also be postmarked from the final where England will, hopefully, emerge the winner. The cover also will carry a special, newly minted, REAL SILVER *1 Franc* 'France 98' coin. Bearing in mind that the Franc will soon be no more and that this historic souvenir will only be available for a short time, it's a piece of history not to be missed - for just **£14.95.** We are also going to have some spectacular AUTOGRAPHED covers available (signatures to be announced later) for the amazing price of **£19.95.**

These will sell out almost immediately - place your order NOW!

N.B. Illustration only - details may vary

THE WORLD CUP COLLECTION

Follow England's progress in the World Cup finals with Benham's magnificent collection of covers for the World Cup finals in France. The collection will consist of a minimum of four covers which will commemorate England's three group matches and the final. However, should Glenn Hoddle's team progress into the later stages of the competition, Benham will commemorate each of the matches on their quest for the championship. (maximum of 7). The covers will feature a scene from each match printed on silken fabric and will be postmarked on the day of the game. The original French stamps produced for the tournament denote each of the venues to be used in the finals.

Signed and unsigned sets of these covers will be available to collectors at a cost of only **£18** unsigned, and signed **£30.**

Please note that should England progress to the latter stages of the tournament, a maximum of three additional covers will be issued to cover each match played. These additional covers will be charged at no more than £4.50 per cover unsigned and no more than £7.50 per cover signed.

CREDIT CARD HOTLINE: **01303 226777**

Please quote ref: WLS9807A

Benham PRIORITY ORDER FORM

Send to:
BENHAM FREEPOST DR175 Folkestone Kent CT20 1BR

Please send me the following:		Qty.	£	p
World Cup Coin Cover	CODE C98/23 £14.95			
World Cup Signed Coin Cover*	CODE C98/23S £19.95			
World Cup Collection*	CODE FB98/02 £18			
World Cup Collection Signed*	CODE FB98/02S £30			
Postage & packing £1.25 (UK)				
I enclose my cheque/p.o. made payable to Benham:	**Total £**			

**Where the final number of covers or the signatories cannot yet be known simply pay the initial value for the items you require. As extra covers become available you will be offered these separately.*

OR Please charge my credit/debit card number:

Switch Issue no. Valid From date:

Expiry date _____

Signature _____ Date _____

Name _____

Address _____

Postcode _____

Covers will be dispatched within 28 days of postmarking. Items offered for sale are limited in number and therefore we cannot guarantee to satisfy every order.
If you are not satisfied you may return the items within 30 days in good condition for a full refund.

Benham House Folkestone Kent CT20 1SD Registered in England No. 1133610 WLS9807A

JULY 1998
VOL.38 NO.10
WORLD CUP SPECIAL

Executive Editor Keir Radnedge
Editor Gavin Hamilton
Art Editor Gary Payne
Picture Editor Duncan Bond
Group Art Editor Stan McDonald
Editorial Secretary June Hiscock

Thanks this issue to:
David Prole, Peter Neish, Debbie Millett, Mike Hughes, Stephanie Jones, Ian Cruise, David Hulmes

Editorial
TEL: 0171-261 5737
FAX: 0171-261 7474
E-MAIL: world_soccer@ipc.co.uk

Advertising Keamus Setna
Production Manager Tom Jennings
Managing Director Andy McDuff
Publisher Sean Singleton

Display Advertising
TEL: 0171-261 5499

Classified Advertising
TEL: 0171-261 2823

Back Issues Department
TEL: 0181-503 0588

WORLD SOCCER
King's Reach Tower
Stamford Street
London, SE1 9LS

ipcmagazines
'A commitment to excellence'
Distributed by Marketforce
ABC Member of the Audit Bureau of Circulations

SUBSCRIPTION HOTLINE
01622 778778

SUBSCRIPTION RATES/ INFORMATION
(Annual subscription is for 12 months) UK: £26.40. Airmail Europe (inc. VAT): £30 (airmail). Airmail Zone A (Middle East & Africa): £35. Airmail Zone B (Americas): £40. Airmail Zone C (Australia, Far East and Rest of World): £45. Surface Worldwide: £28. Price includes contribution to postage.
Send orders to PO Box 272, Perrymount Road, Haywards Heath, West Sussex RH16 3DH
General enquiries & overseas orders: 01444-445555.
Renewals: 01622-778777.

WORLD SOCCER is a member of
EUROPEAN SPORTS MAGAZINES
A Bola (Portugal), **don balon** (Spain), **Foot** (Belgium), **Kicker** (Germany), **Gazzetta dello Sport** (Italy), **France Football** (France), **Sport** (Switzerland), **Voetbal International** (Holland), **WORLD SOCCER** (UK)

Contents

July 1998

WELCOME to the biggest (and we believe the best) ever issue of *World Soccer*. It's a special edition, but then 32-team World Cups don't come around very often.

We all have an opinion on the expansion of the finals (mine is that it cannot be, as FIFA would say, for the good of the game). But a bigger World Cup means a bigger *World Soccer*, and an opportunity to do what we do best: bring you the best possible analysis of the greatest show on earth.

The decision to increase the cover price for this special issue was not taken lightly, but it was the only way to pay for the quality of coverage needed to do all 32 finalists justice.

This month we not only bring you exclusive interviews with superstars old and new, we also speak to the 32 men who will really matter in France: the coaches. If their players perform, they will be hailed as heroes. If they fail, as so many will, they will be harassed, harangued and compared unfavourably with peculiarly shaped vegetables.

I estimate that *World Soccer* will have more reporters in France than almost any other publication in the world. Next month, we'll bring you the full story of how the 16th World Cup finals were won.

Until then, enjoy the carnival.

Gavin Hamilton, Editor

10 Joao Havelange
The outgoing FIFA President talks exclusively to Keir Radnedge.

12 World Cup Legends >
Face to face with Franz Beckenbauer, Lucien Laurent and Just Fontaine

14

18 Six of the best
We turn the spotlight on the potential stars of the tournament: Ronaldo, Alesandro Del Piero, Raul, Paul Scholes, Victor Ikpeba and Dennis Bergkamp.

The ultimate guide to France 98 >

REGULARS
Keir Radnedge 6
World Soccer by post 134
World Service 120
Brian Glanville 152

WORLD NEWS
Italy 104
Spain 106
Germany 108
France 108
England 111
Western Europe 112
Eastern Europe 114
Scandinavia 114
South America 117
Africa 118
Asia 118

24 The venues
Stadium expert Simon Inglis reports on the France 98 grounds

22

102 Champions League Final
Juventus-Real Madrid: the full story from Amsterdam of the climax to the European club season

24

154 The draw
The full fixture list for France 98

Group A
Brazil 32
Scotland 34
Morocco 36
Norway 38

Group B
Italy 40
Chile 42
Cameroon 44
Austria 46

Group C
France 48
South Africa 50
Saudi Arabia 52
Denmark 54

Group D
Spain 56
Nigeria 58
Paraguay 60
Bulgaria 62

Group E
Holland 64
Belgium 66
South Korea 68
Mexico 70

Group F
Germany 72
United States 74
Yugoslavia 76
Iran 78

Group G
Romania 80
Colombia 82
England 84
Tunisia 88

Group H
Argentina 90
Japan 92
Jamaica 94
Croatia 96

Keir Radnedge
Executive Editor
COMMENTARY

The biggest, not the best

After the hype comes the reality – and 32 teams may prove too many

ALL THE waiting and wondering will shortly be over. On June 10, in the imposing new Stade de France in Saint-Denis, Brazil and Scotland will kick off the 1998 World Cup.

The last World Cup of the century. The biggest World Cup, with 32 participants. Also the richest, the most widely hyped, the most watched – with a worldwide television audience of billions following the action over four-and-a-half weeks.

Of course, being the biggest World Cup does not mean it will be the best. Quite the reverse. The more teams you allow in, the lower the common denominator in terms of quality – whatever organising co-president Michel Platini may say to the contrary. But then, he has a vested interest.

At least the gargantuan expansion to 32 teams will sharpen up the drama in the first round. Only the top two teams from each group will go forward to the knock-out stages. The option of qualifying as a third-placed team has gone: that means it is no longer enough to seek, negatively, to draw all your matches. One group victory is essential, if not two.

The action will carry another benefit: it will end almost all the phoney-war fuss over organisation, particularly with regard to ticket sales. With hindsight, that the French public should have access to 'only' 60 per cent of tickets seems somewhat mean. But all the federations carry greater or lesser responsibility for the tickets farce. All had the right of objecting to the original ticket sale proposals four years ago. To blame the French is mere face-saving.

The ticket sale storm has merely underlined just how big the World Cup has become. The Olympic Games may take over cities and last almost as long. Every other sport may have jumped on the bandwagon down the years and organised its own world championship. But nothing compares, in terms of concentrated global passion, with soccer's fiesta every four years.

This is why England and Germany have resumed one of the greatest rivalries in the game over who hosts the finals of 2006 (in which South Africa, Brazil and Argentina also have interests). This is why Japan and South Korea tried to outbid each other in technological gimmickry to win the rights to stage the finals in 2002 (which they must now share).

Platini considers the World Cup standard as having been set by Mexico in 1970, still considered the greatest World Cup of them all. He wants to see France 98 display the same highly skilled, caution-to-the-wind attacking football for which Mexico 1970 has gone down in legend.

Of course, no single player today matches Pele in his 1970 omnipotence; no single team may be worthy to stand comparison with his hat-trick-winning Brazil side. But there is much that can make France 98 memorable.

Most intriguing is that International Board decision to crack down on football's destructive, defensive thugs. Banning the tackle from behind – the automatic punishment will be a red card no matter where the offence may have been committed on the pitch – should hand soccer back to the skilled, creative extroverts. Increasing the size of the finals from 24 to 32 nations

A familiar sight in France?...Ronaldo restrained

should intensify the sense of international carnival. Staging the event in France provides the foundation in tradition in which the success of the game is rooted.

This is the second time France has played host – an honour it will now share with just Mexico (1970 and 1986) and Italy (1934 and 1990). But whereas the first French World Cup, in 1938, took place beneath the shadow of oncoming world war, the 1998 finals will explode in happy juxtaposition to the millennium.

The 1998 World Cup finals thus carry the weighty responsibility of setting the tone for soccer going into the 21st century. More particularly, the world's greatest players have been left in no doubt that they carry the responsibility on their own shoulders.

The signal was given last December when one player from each of the qualified nations took a hand in helping FIFA general secretary Sepp Blatter make the draw in the redeveloped Velodrome stadium in Marseille – after first competing in an all-star game between Europe and the Rest of the World, which the latter won 5-2.

What mattered was not the result but the fulfilment of the organisers' promise that the World Cup should be "given back to football". As Platini said: "All the draws at previous World Cups were taken up with dancing displays and officials. We intended to put football back at the heart of the tournament – and that meant starting with the draw itself."

Four-times winners and holders Brazil, hosts France, past winners Italy, Argentina and Germany and top-ranked European nations Spain, Holland and Romania – a status based on their records in the past three Cups as well as the world rankings – were the eight top seeds. After that, the finalists were evenly balanced so that the nations of South America, CONCACAF, Africa and Asia were spread evenly across the tournament.

All eight first-round mini-leagues will be completed by June 26, with the top two teams in each group going through to the second round...and the bottom two in each group going home to the usual happy mixture of rotten tomatoes, media fury and managerial dismissal.

One hopes that, amid all the tension and pressure, no player or coach suffers the tragic fate which awaited Andres Escobar, who was shot dead after returning home following Colombia's first-round exit from the 1994 finals in the United States.

From the second round onwards, the World Cup goes into competitive overdrive. Each match will be straight knock-out from the second round, via quarter-finals and semi-finals, right through to the Final itself, back in the Stade de France, on July 12.

Rising to the occasion

If scores are level after 90 minutes, a maximum 30 minutes of extra time will be played – less than that if one team score because FIFA is introducing the golden goal rule for the first time at a World Cup. If nobody strikes gold then, after the usual half-hour, a penalty shoot-out will determine the result.

Reputations will be polished...and tarnished. The World Cup, as Platini likes to say, is all about the star players. The first, appropriately, was Frenchman Lucien Laurent, who scored the first-ever World Cup goal in the 1930 opening match against Mexico in Montevideo.

Now the smart money is on Brazil's Ronaldo to step into the limelight. But there will be others – players and teams who will rise to the occasion and surprise the world. And there is no greater sporting occasion than the World Cup finals.

A World Cup staged in Europe should, logically, produce a European winner. Yet, during the 68 years of the event, only three European nations have ever won the greatest prize.

The new heroes of Germany (winners in 1954, 1974 and 1990), Italy (1934, 1938 and 1982) and England (1966) may have their work cut out as they seek to emulate their countrymen from earlier eras. But if the World Cup trophy is to return to a European bank vault for the next four years, then one of this trio is the most likely destination.

The perpetual danger offered by a German team far from the inspired heights of the Beckenbauer-Muller-Overath winners of 1974 was summed up by envious Portugal boss Humberto Coelho, after watching his nation fall short of qualifying from Germany's group.

"Germany may not have the best players or the most skilful players," he said. "But they have a winning mentality and a strength of purpose which makes the difference. It's no accident they haven't lost a penalty shoot-out for more than 20 years."

Coach Berti Vogts, a winning player in 1974, regrets that Germany is not producing young talent as plentifully as in the past. But balance is provided by the experience of midfield men such as Andy Moller and Thomas Hassler, the defensive security of Thomas Helmer and the attacking drive of Oliver Bierhoff and, if he can get his act together one last time, of Jurgen Klinsmann.

Germany will miss the perceptive guidance from libero Matthias Sammer. But then, every country has injury problems. England have suffered a plethora of them in the run-up to the finals. Coach Glenn Hoddle, who played in midfield in the 1982 and 1986 finals, worries most about centre-forward Alan Shearer.

When fit, few centre-forwards can match Shearer's fearless pursuit of goals. Hoddle says he rates Shearer more highly than Ronaldo. But the Newcastle spearhead missed the first half of the season through the sort of luckless ankle injury to which his courage makes him susceptible. If Shearer can stay in one piece, then the accompanying youthful support of the likes of Manchester United's exciting David Beckham and even controversial old favourite Paul Gascoigne could take England a long way.

The one nagging doubt lies not so much in physical but temperamental frailty. The English game is a physical one. How will the likes of Paul Ince and David Batty, ball-winners supreme, survive the refereeing crackdown?

Italy, of course, have a score to settle with the World Cup. Four years ago, they lost to Brazil in the Final on a penalty shoot-out. Italy had been lifted to the Final not so much by team brilliance as the inspirational individualism of Roberto Baggio. But the sense of injustice rankles – along with a feeling that present coach Cesare Maldini has a far better rapport with his players than predecessor Arrigo Sacchi, the arch theorist.

Skipper Paolo Maldini, the coach's son, guarantees security in the tackle and pace on the break from defence. Demetrio Albertini and Dino Baggio bring economy of effort to midfield and Alex Del Piero – if he maintains his recent form for Juventus – promises to emulate the achievements of Baggio in 1994.

'Germany may not have the best players but the fact that they haven't lost a penalty shoot-out for 20 years is no accident'

Then there are the hosts. France may never have had so many talented players in one squad. The down side is that this brilliance is confined to defence and midfield. Lilian Thuram has proved himself, at Parma in Italy, to be one of the world's classiest central defenders. Yet such is the depth of French talent – Laurent Blanc, Marcel Desailly, Frank Leboeuf – that coach Aime Jacquet uses him as a 'mere' right-back.

Youri Djorkaeff from Internazionale and Zinedine Zidane from Juventus are two of European football's finest attacking midfielders; Didier Deschamps, also from Juventus, one of the most disciplined anchor men. But if France fall short of the ultimate goal – literally – it will be because the midfield cannot carry the extra burden of regularly putting the ball in the net.

After that, the European challenge falls away. Spain

In the middle of it...Zinedine Zidane

may be dangerous outsiders now that, in Real Madrid's Raul and Fernando Morientes, they have unearthed two young strikers to capitalise on their disciplined approach play, a feature of their game in the World Cups of 1990 and 1994 and the 1996 European Championship.

But Holland carry an ever-present risk of self-destruction while Bulgaria and Romania are ageing and past their best. Croatia have made little progress since reaching the quarter-finals of Euro 96 and Yugoslavia – back for the first time at top level since civil war – may lack tournament knowhow. At World Cup level, there is nothing quite like experience, which Brazil and Argentina – the serious Latin American challengers – possess in abundance.

Psychotherapy and short hair

Of the rest, Chile, for all the attacking potential of old hand Ivan Zamorano and the explosive emergence of Marcelo Salas, have a well-documented propensity for freezing on the big World Cup occasion.

Colombia's only ambition is to achieve a solid result – even the second round will do – to erase the traumatic memories of 1994. Mexico's warm-up form has been so poor that the local media has suggested the players need psychotherapy, and Paraguay have no more realistic ambition than to write a footnote in history if Jose Luis Chilavert can become the first goalkeeper to score (in the opposition net) at a World Cup from a penalty or free-kick.

However, Argentina and Brazil are something else.

Argentina know what it is like to win the World Cup. They did so at home in 1978 and in Mexico in 1986. Daniel Passarella, their 1978 captain, is now the coach – a man whose iron discipline reflects the iron tackling of his playing days.

Passarella has been ridiculed for demanding a strict dress code among his players which outlaws earrings and long hair. But complaints at the absence of stars such as Real Madrid's (long-haired) midfielder Fernando Redondo ignore the truth of the matter: that Passarella has so much burgeoning talent at his disposal he can afford to be tough.

Ariel Ortega, Marcelo Gallardo and Juan Sebastian Veron have the exquisite skill plus killer instinct which bodes well not merely for this World Cup but for Japan and South Korea in four years' time. Above all, Argentina possess one of the really dangerous attack leaders in record marksman Gabriel Batistuta – and possession of such a player is a prerequisite for World Cup glory.

The chink in Argentina's armour is in goal. Passarella tried out six goalkeepers in the qualifying competition, and few observers have much confidence as to whether German Burgos, Carlos Roa or Pablo Cavallero possess the safe hands traditionally associated with that position in past heroes such as Ubaldo Fillol, Nery Pumpido and Sergio Goycochea.

At least they should have few problems in progressing from a first round group which features Japan, Jamaica and Croatia. Once in the knock-out stage, anything can happen.

Finally, what remains to be said about Brazil?

They are World Cup favourites – as usual. They possess boundless self-confidence in their own technical brilliance – as usual. They boast great strikers (in Ronaldo and Romario) – as usual.

Such a potent mixture should intimidate opponents halfway to defeat even before kick-off. But, as veteran coach Mario Zagallo has warned, Brazil's confidence in their own brilliance may prove their worst enemy.

Zagallo won the World Cup as a player in 1958 and 1962 and as coach in 1970. He was assistant to Carlos Alberto Parreira four years ago. He has seen the World Cup from every perspective.

His conclusion is this: "If we go to the World Cup believing what is written and reported, we will not win. The burden of pressure will be too much. We could be complacent – and that always proves fatal."

It did in 1982, in Spain, and again in 1986 in Mexico. That is why Zagallo, to the doubtful murmurs of even the likes of Pele, has kept faith with old heads such as Dunga – Cup-winning skipper in 1994 – in midfield, Aldair in defence, Claudio Taffarel in goal and Romario up front.

Brazil disappointed with a style of play in 1994 which was cautious by their own historic standards. Zagallo knows it. He wants to give his attacking players more freedom without compromising defensive security.

In Ronaldo and Denilson – the latter bound for Spanish club Real Betis after the finals for a world record £19million – Brazil have the attacking genius to outshoot the rest.

Ronaldo, twice FIFA World Footballer of the Year, says he wants to break Just Fontaine's record of 13 goals, set in 1958. That is unlikely. But opponents may well spend so much time and effort thwarting his ambition that his team-mates will capitalise on the extra time and space to do the damage instead.

Brazil, in 1958 in Sweden, became the only nation to win the World Cup outside 'their' continent. Forty years on, history may be about to repeat itself.

Father forgive me. It's two seasons since my last confession.

I deliberately pulled a certain player's shirt in a game last season.

Then in another game, I shoved a player when the ref wasn't looking.

In a big home game, I swore at the linesman.

Then in the same game I swore at the referee... twice. Or was it three times.

Actually I think I may have sworn at the referee in the next game as well.

Oh, and in another match, I threw a punch at this player... but I did get sent off for that one.

Another time I kicked a player, I got away with it, so I kicked him again.

In the next game I had a run in with a striker that got a bit out of hand.

Oh... and in training last week I had a go at one of my team mates.

At half time, I had a little scuffle in the tunnel.

And I keep having these terrible thoughts about what I'm going to do to this certain player next time I play against him.

I keep having this overwhelming

http://www.snickers.com

NOT GOING ANYWHERE FOR A WHILE?

GRAB A

SNICKERS® FRANCE 98

© MARS 1996 © 1994 ISL TM

Hungry? Why wait?™

The World Soccer interview

Beyond reproach...

President Havelange is quitting FIFA with his head held high, he tells Keir Radnedge in an exclusive interview

JOAO HAVELANGE retires as FIFA president at Congress in Paris on the eve of the World Cup finals. The vote for his successor, between Sweden's UEFA president Lennart Johansson and Switzerland's FIFA general secretary Sepp Blatter, is likely to be close. Johansson has been a self-declared candidate for two years; Blatter for two months. Johansson believes Europe and Africa will vote for him virtually en bloc; Blatter believes in the power of defectors. These certainly include Denmark and may encompass Switzerland (out of loyalty to Blatter) and France (out of loyalty to Blatter's 'vice-presidential' candidate, Michel Platini). Johansson's proposals for democratic change within FIFA are endorsed by various colleagues within the FIFA executive and outside 'names' such as Pele. But Havelange has publicly backed Blatter for the sake of continuity of his work. Here he gives Keir Radnedge an exclusive insight into the state of FIFA when he took over...and the size of his achievement.

WORLD SOCCER: You have been FIFA president since 1974. Nobody has dared seriously challenge you. Are you sure you are ready to retire?

JOAO HAVELANGE: I know many people think that I'm not going to leave. But it is a final decision. Everything in life comes to an end and now that I have passed my 80th birthday that time has arrived for me and the FIFA presidency.

We all know about FIFA's power nowadays, but how did you find it when you became president in 1974 after ousting Sir Stanley Rous at the Frankfurt Congress?

I came into the job on June 11, 1974, on the eve of the World Cup finals in West Germany. I soon realised the enormity of the task I had taken on. When I looked through the agenda for the first meeting of the new executive committee which I was expected to chair, I realised that several traps had been set for me because many of the decisions had already been taken unofficially by other people, behind the scenes. That was when I understood I would have to set up all the relevant committees myself so that I had the power to solve all the problems with which FIFA had to deal...finance, TV, sponsorship, technical development, and so on.

Is this why you have developed a particular reputation for your control of FIFA's committees?

I can only say what happened in those first weeks and what it taught me. Before that initial meeting in June 1974 I summoned all the FIFA vice-presidents and told them of my concerns. I wanted them to give me a chance to postpone the meeting for two months so I had time to study the way FIFA did its work and work out how best to tackle things. They agreed – so that first meeting lasted just 20 minutes.

Were there any other nasty surprises?

Yes. Another surprise for me was to be given the agenda of the International Board meeting the day after the World Cup Final in Munich. How FIFA responded at the meeting was all down to me and I didn't know anything about what I should be saying or proposing. To give you an insight into the way it worked in those days, to attend the International Board events you needed a dinner jacket. I hadn't known that so I hadn't brought one with me to Munich. I didn't want to be made to look a fool, so I flew home to Brazil and sent my apologies to the meeting. I like to think I have helped change both the attitudes and the approach to the work and responsibilities of the International Board since then! I have certainly tried my best to contribute to its efficiency by setting up committees such as the one for referees and then, more recently, Task Force 2000.

FIFA House today is seen as a monument to your presidency. What offices did FIFA own in 1974?

It's hard for people nowadays to imagine what FIFA was like when I became president. We didn't have a proper headquarters, just an old house in Zurich in which the secretary lived with his wife, two sons, a cat and a dog. There wasn't any room for a meeting of more than four people. It was like a family gathering. Immediately I said that we needed a proper headquarters but I was told that we didn't have the funds. So I asked what we spent on hotels for meetings, on travel expenses and on the cost of carrying our documentation and paperwork from one meeting to another. Then I went to our bankers and asked for a loan so we could build our own HQ. I told them we could afford to repay the same amount that we spent each year on hotels for our meetings. They agreed, so we got our headquarters but no extra expense was incurred because the land itself already belonged to FIFA. I asked for 20 years to pay off the loan at four per cent per annum – and that's how the wonderful FIFA House we have now was built.

But FIFA has been expanding the site, too...

FIFA has grown so much that we had to expand. We bought an old hotel next door in which to establish our technical services and we have also bought another house, although we cannot take possession of it yet. We have agreed with the lady who owns it that she can live in the house for the rest of her life. Only when she dies will the house become FIFA's property. Then there is a fourth property. We are badly in need of a communications centre so we bought the Sonnenburg Hotel on the other side of FIFA House. This caused a lot of controversy locally so it had to go to a referendum, and we won 70 per cent of local support to go ahead with our redevelopment. The restaurant will continue to be open to the public – and to visitors to FIFA. All these are tangible assets we have developed over the years – and they demonstrate how FIFA itself has grown and has had to grow.

How has FIFA grown in competition terms during your reign?

When I arrived at FIFA we ran two competitions only: the World Cup and the football tournament at the Olympic Games. And, frankly, the Olympic tournament was a mess because of the confusion over amateurism. I realised very early on that the situation could not continue but it took time to change things because of the need to maintain good relations within the International Olympic Committee. But it was plainly wrong that 27 and 28-year-olds – the 'state amateurs' from eastern Europe – were competing against 17 and 18-year-olds from the rest of the world. So all this has changed and so has FIFA's competitions structure and responsibility. Now we have 10 events, including the World Cup, the two age-group world championships, the restyled Olympic Games tournament, the Confederations Cup and the women's world championship. FIFA's expansion and the expansion of international football has changed the financial face of our operation.

For instance?

When I became president all countries had to pay their representatives' expenses. Now FIFA covers everything, including all first-class travel for officials who attend meetings of our 15 committees. That means more than 300 people attending meetings held a minimum of two or three times a year, often more. That's not a small item. But FIFA does it gladly because it is for the good of the game.

FIFA has been criticised for creating committees for their own sake. How important are they all?

They are all crucial to the healthy development of our game, to help it maintain its place as the world's No 1 sport. For example, we have all the necessary administrative committees. But it's also been necessary to consider the medical aspect of football. We have undertaken medical studies of altitude, temperature, humidity, etc. It's been important to study nourishment, drug abuse, injuries. That's why we have developed the concern about the tackle from behind. We have been clear in our aim. And for very good reason. Consider Marco Van Basten. He was a great player who had to give up at 29. He had to undergo five ankle operations as a consequence of injuries caused by tackles from behind. We invited him to come and tell us about it but he didn't want to know. It's as if he doesn't want anything more to do with football because of the pain it brought him. That's the effect it had on him. We want our sport to contribute to the health of men and women, not damage it. That's why FIFA then made the recommendations you know about to the International Board.

Retiring happy...Joao Havelange is proud of his record as FIFA president

"I have spent 7,200 days out of nearly 9,000 outside of my own country on FIFA duties. So nobody can fault my commitment to the game"

Do you think the game has changed substantially since 1974?

Let me describe the conclusions of another piece of research to demonstrate the point. In 1970, when we first studied refereeing at a World Cup, a match official covered 6km during a game. During the Italy v Brazil Final at the 1994 World Cup it was 15km. So we cut the international referees' age limit from 50 to 45 on the recommendation of our medical committee. In around 20 per cent of matches the referee was not fit enough to last the match, which meant he risked making serious mistakes late in a game. Twenty years ago our World Cup referees were in their late 40s. Now if a referee has not made the grade by the age of 38 or 40, then he will not make a World Cup referee.

Where does the money come from?

The World Cup remains the most important single contributor to FIFA's financial health. In 1978 the World Cup turnover was around $88,000. Now it's up to $500million. Now, consider the technical aspect of the finals: we have twice as many teams as we had in 1974 – 32 compared with 16 – yet the event covers virtually the same amount of time. Some more figures: the 2002 World Cup will generate $1.6billion; FIFA has property worth $100million; and in the next 10 years we will secure more than $4billion in the FIFA accounts. Between real estate and financial assets everything has been achieved to provide the international game with a solid administrative foundation. On the sporting side, everything I wanted has also been achieved. All the countries in every continent play against each other in competition. From an administrative angle, FIFA had seven employees when I arrived, then we had 32 and now we have 67.

You have been quoted as describing FIFA in terms of a commercial multinational. Is this really appropriate or a necessary philosophy for a sports administrative body?

The scope of FIFA's work is now so vast I know no other relevant comparison. You know, 400 million people depend on football, directly or indirectly, for their living. It is one of the biggest multinationals with $150billion a year circulating around the world. Now the biggest commercial corporation is General Motors and that has an annual turnover of $170billion. We are catching up.

You have been criticised for being a football dictator. How do you react to that?

Now that we have all this talk of democracy around, I would like to make a point: the executive committee of FIFA, its most powerful body, is elected by the continental confederations. I have nothing to do with it. I am merely the president of the committee and I have to adapt myself to the varying balance of the committee I am given. Again, we could not have had anyone more competent serving FIFA as our general secretary than Mr Blatter. But he was appointed in the first place by the executive, not by me. Then, all the employees within FIFA have been appointed by the general secretary, not by me. He is responsible for his staff. Nobody can reproach me in this area.

You own one of Brazil's biggest transport companies. How much time have you been able to dedicate to FIFA?

Now that I am approaching retirement I did the sums recently. In my time as FIFA president I have spent 7,200 days out of nearly 9,000 outside of my own country on FIFA duties. Who dares complain? Only my wife because I am never at home! So nobody can fault my commitment to the game. Nobody can reproach my motives, either. For instance, in all my time as FIFA president I have never signed as much as one cheque. Only the general secretary has that sort of authority.

Have you visited all FIFA's member countries?

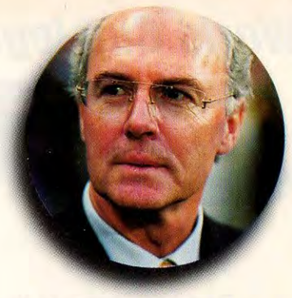
Not quite. I have been to 'only' 196. I have not been to Anaruba, Samoa and a couple of the former Soviet Asian republics. But I have travelled from Patagonia in Argentina to Kuopio in Finland. None of the member countries can complain. And something else: the more I travelled throughout the world, the more I was struck by the plight of so many of the children I saw. That's how I got the idea of setting up some sort of charitable foundation. But this is not easy and anyway FIFA is a football organisation. So we had the idea of supporting the SOS Children's Villages. They have 480 homes around the world staffed by marvellous, caring people. We provide financial support as well as sports equipment through the help of companies such as Adidas and Coca-Cola to bring a little pleasure into the children's lives. My life is reaching its end but one has to connect to those whose lives are just beginning.

When you look back over your sporting career, what do you recall?

I was a water polo player at the Olympic Games. But I loved all sport. So I remember watching the World Cup in 1950, in Brazil, when we lost to Uruguay in the Final, with a tear in my eye. I became a member of what was then CBD, our governing sports authority, from 1955 to 1974. I gave my country three World Cup victories. At one stage the military tried to kick me out. They couldn't. When I left the CBD in the end it was my own choice, to go to FIFA. I did not come here to see matches and cheer. I had certain aspirations, as with all my companies. I try to administer them successfully and I believe my record shows I have done that. I am modestly proud of what I have achieved. Now I am leaving FIFA and, again, it is my own choice. I can put my hand on my heart and say that I have had no vested interest other than advancing the cause of football. Nobody can say otherwise.

World Cup legends Franz Beckenbauer

1966 and all that



Never mind the third goal – England deserved their win, the Kaiser is happy to reveal to Keir Radnedge

FRANZ BECKENBAUER has been one of football's top personalities of the century. First as a great player who redefined the horizons of defenders as creators. Then as World Cup-winning captain, a football missionary in the United States, a World Cup-winning coach and now as president of Bayern Munich.

Beckenbauer, known as the Kaiser, burst on the international scene at the 1966 World Cup. On the eve of the 1998 finals, he tells Keir Radnedge what he remembers, what has changed and what he expects from France 98.

WORLD SOCCER: Most people first heard of you during the 1966 World Cup, when England beat West Germany. How do you remember that event?

FRANZ BECKENBAUER: I have just watched a film of the 1966 final for the first time in all these years. It wasn't such a tactical game as you see today, but that's how football was then. We didn't think much about tactics.

Today, there is too much emphasis on tactics and not enough on talent and technique. When we got the ball all we thought about was to go forward. Perhaps it was a little naive. We didn't think about going back and across and so on as teams do nowadays.

I talked about this recently with Bobby Charlton and he agreed that fans in those days enjoyed watching football for its own sake.

Comparing 1966 with now, it seems as if it was almost an amateur event. There were comparatively few journalists and television stations. Before our first match we organised a press conference, which was unusual in those days. Helmut Schon, the manager, took me along because I was a new, young player in the team and he thought that might be interesting, but only six or seven journalists were there.

Nowadays, for a press conference at the World Cup, you need space for 400 people and two dozen television stations. It's so much more professional.

How has the game changed?

Interestingly, the game has changed partly because the ball has changed. Now we have all these water-resistant materials which means the ball doesn't get heavier. The ball runs faster and so do the players. The game now is much more athletic but not so good to watch.

It's all about security. First of all, you mustn't lose. In 1966, our priority was always that we wanted to win. Today people say, "it's good if we don't lose."

Germany have a wonderful World Cup record. What's the secret?

German teams like pressure. Some teams play wonderful football but, if things don't go right, they lose their self-confidence. German teams always play badly against second-rank and third-rank teams, but against the likes of Brazil, Italy and England they play well and win – recently of course against Brazil, but that was a friendly. Germany and Brazil have never played each other in the World Cup. But if we did so in France, then I would be confident that our team would rise to the occasion.

Do Germany prepare better than other nations?

It's not what people think. German players are not better trained, they don't have better technique and they don't use better tactics. But German teams always have great spirit and will to win.

Another thing people don't think about which is very important: a tournament like a World Cup means 22 players have to spend two months in each other's company all the time. When you include preparation time and the tournament itself, it's about eight or nine weeks away from home and their families. It's a long time for young men. Many players are not prepared for that mentally and they cannot handle it.

But the German player is ready to cope with that because he wants to – he has this winning spirit…

…if not always the greatest talent?

Our game is a simple style. We cannot play like Brazil or Portugal – they are amazing, like dancers. We play an orthodox powerful game. We have many creative players in our club game like Elber at my club, Bayern, for example. But they are all foreigners! We don't have players like them.

That's another difficult thing for new players coming into the squad. They find we play a different style of game in the national team because we have to. We don't have the luxury players they are used to in their club sides.

What do you expect of this World Cup?

It will be very good because France is a country which has ideal conditions. Not cold, but then not too hot. Not humid like it was in Orlando at the last World Cup. The pitches will be good and the atmosphere will be excellent. All the European teams, in particular, should enjoy the conditions.

Who will win, if not Germany?

Brazil are obviously everyone's favourites. That's down to history, partly – but only partly. Ronaldo and Romario have so much talent.

I've never seen a player like Ronaldo. I have seen many players with great speed and many players with great ball control. But I have never seen anyone who can control the ball at speed the way he can. He has this great, natural instinct to know where the goal is but is also intelligent enough to know how to find space when he is being close-marked – and he only needs a little space, then he can use his speed and he's gone.

Elber at Bayern is one of the best strikers in the Bundesliga, if not the best, but Brazil don't want him for the World Cup because they don't need him. They have 10 or 15 other players with all the same qualities.

The only question I would raise against Brazil is that they have played four years of friendly matches, if you discount the Copa America. So I'm not sure they are really as good as people expect them to be.

As you know from your experiences in 1966 as a loser and in 1974 as a winner, the hosts have particular advantages. What about France?

It's harder to be hosts than it looks, because your own crowds expect so much of you. For me, France have the same problem they had at the last European Championship finals – they have nobody to score the goals.

They play wonderful football all round the rest of the pitch but they cannot put the ball into the net.

How do players compare between 1966 and now?

Players are just as intelligent today. Indeed, they have to think much more about the game, but that is partly because it's a different game.

As I said before, the pressure is greater. It was like a semi-professional event in 1966. Not now! If you won then, you got six or seven paragraphs in one corner inside the newspaper and that was the end of it. Nowadays, if you lose, you get criticised all over the country by thousands of journalists on radio, television, newspapers, magazines.

In 1966 the game was more individual. You wanted to entertain. Today, at least in Germany, it's as if the aim of the game is to keep the ball until you send the fans to sleep.

I saw the difference when I watched the 1966 World Cup Final on my video. It was a good game because everyone went forward. The right-back passed up to the libero, who passed up to the half-back, and so on.

In my day you got the ball, stopped it, looked around, thought for a while about what you wanted to do and, eventually, you did it. Not today. Nowadays when you get the ball, you get two opponents coming in right behind it!

Any last thoughts about that 1966 final?

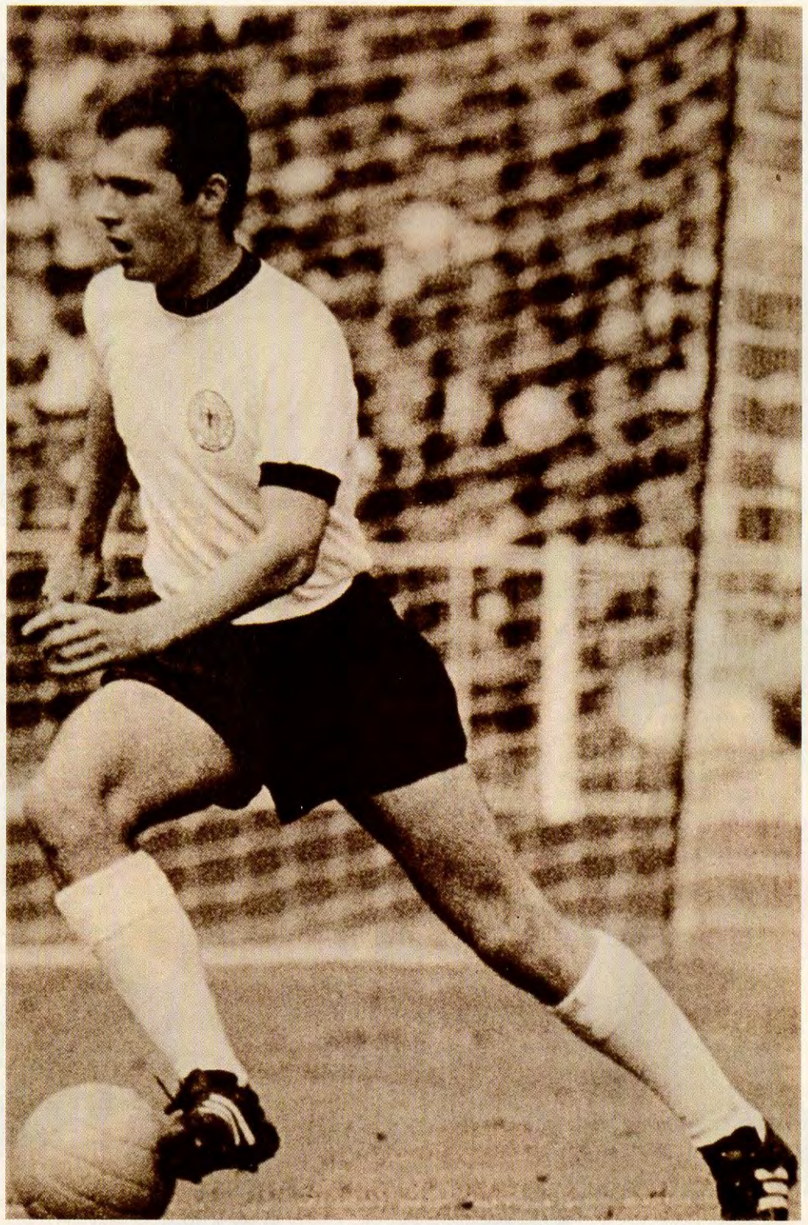
At that time, our manager had the brilliant idea that I should follow Bobby Charlton everywhere he went. So I did. We need not have been on the pitch.

All I remember at the end was not so much disappointment but relief that it was all over.

Mind you, I was only 20 and we didn't have all the sophisticated fitness routines they have today. I remember feeling very tired, that I couldn't have run another yard.

One other thing. Seeing the match right through after all these years I must say it…never mind that controversial third goal, was the ball over the line or not? England had a great team and they deserved to win.

On top of the world… Geoff Hurst clinches England's 1966 Wembley triumph with the fourth goal against West Germany



Prime cut… Young Beckenbauer was quick to turn defence into attack

World Cup legends Lucien Laurent

Still a mascot at 91

Keir Radnedge meets the scorer of the World Cup's first goal

MASCOTS come in all shapes and sizes, from the six-year-olds who trot out with their team before a League match to the cartoon characters created to part the public from its money in the cause of World Cup merchandising.

Some of us remember World Cup Willie from 1966. Very few remember Gauchito from Argentina in 1978. And whatever happened to Germany's Tip and Tap or Berni the (European Championship) Bunny?

But Lucien Laurent, he's a different matter. For one thing, at 91 he is a little old to be a mascot. For another, he is very much a real person. Finally, he possesses a significance to which no other mascot may ever dare aspire.

Not that Laurent is a formal mascot. You won't find his face on T-shirts or models of the Eiffel Tower. But you will find his name in the football history books – and that is why it is such a delight to be able to honour that name over the next few weeks.

For Lucien Laurent is the Frenchman who scored the first goal in the World Cup. Not merely the first French goal, but the first goal of them all. If such a historical heritage does not instill a little extra inspiration in the likes of Zinedine Zidane and Youri Djorkaeff then nothing will. Thus may France aspire to join the elite band of nations who have won the World Cup in front of their own fans.

Laurent's passion for the game remains as intense as it was almost 70 years ago. Indeed, he was still playing – for a veterans' team, naturally – well into his 80s. Then his family suggested he hang up his boots. After all, there was a World Cup coming and he had always dreamed of seeing 'his' competition back in France.

Ironically, for all their talent in midfield, the one question mark against France is whether they have anyone consistent enough to produce the goals they need.

Even back on July 13, 1930, on a snow-dusted winter pitch in front of about 1,000 fans at Pocitos Stadium in Montevideo, Uruguay, Laurent's historic 12th-minute goal in a 4-1 win over Mexico was not enough to help France past the first round. That was a bitter blow for the French, one of only four European countries who undertook the gruelling two-week boat trip to South America.

Jules Rimet, then president of FIFA and the French Federation, had struggled to encourage European participation in the inaugural World Cup – the cost and duration of the journey were major obstacles. Full professionalism in France had not yet been introduced and permission for six weeks' leave of absence had to be obtained from the various employers.

As an assembly line worker with Peugeot, Laurent, along with three team-mates from Sochaux, had no such difficulty.They already were semi-professionals, working in the mornings but allowed time off for two-hour training sessions three times a week.

Laurent remembers, however, that there was no serious preparation for the World Cup. "We just received a letter a week in advance telling us to report to Marseille to be measured for our blazers and kit," he says, with a smile and a wink aimed at today's precisely-programmed football robots.

There were 16 players in the French squad and they sailed on the same liner as Romania and Belgium – Yugoslavia having set out two days earlier. Romania embarked first, at Genoa. France joined at Villefranche-sur-Mer and Belgium joined them at Barcelona. Only now, 68 years later, has the local council in Villefranche-sur-Mer got around to raising a small memorial to that historic embarkation.

The French delegation included Rimet, with a brand-new, solid-gold World Cup trophy in his luggage. The players had to carry out their training routines on the deck they shared with other passengers. Only one morning session was missed – the day after a fancy-dress ball to celebrate crossing the equator!

That and the carnival reception afforded the party on arriving in the bay of Rio de Janeiro, where they picked up the Brazilian squad, are among Laurent's most vivid recollections.

"We were given a wonderful reception on the Sugarloaf Mountain," he says, wistfully. And they were given another rapturous welcome when they sailed into Montevideo on July 4.

Laurent says: "We had very little time to find our land legs. We were shown a small pitch about the size of a basketball pitch to play on and we could only train like amateur athletes because the ground had no goalposts."

France were matched in a first-round mini-league group with Argentina, the second favourites, Mexico and Chile.

'Lulu' has vivid recollections of the first game. "We lost our goalkeeper with a broken jaw early on and had to continue with 10 men. Substitutes were unheard-of in those days. We were playing in a WM formation. Our centre-forward, Andre Maschinot, passed to the right-winger, Ernest Liberati, and when he crossed, I just got to it first... "

Laurent remembers it being a good goal, "but we didn't make the fuss players make nowadays, throwing themselves around on the ground." Instead, he was satisfied with a few pats on the back from team-mates and polite applause from the spectators.

On the ball...Lucien Laurent still in shape after all this time

But despite their victory over Mexico, France lost to Argentina and Chile by 1-0.

The match against Argentina is a painful memory. France were forced, once more, to play most of it with 10 men, this time because Laurent had to leave the field for treatment after being brutally fouled. Despite that, the French appeared on the brink of equalising when the referee inexplicably ended the game five minutes early. In one of the earliest documented incidents of crowd disturbance, spectators invaded the pitch and the teams were called back to finish the match. By then, of course, the French momentum had subsided and they lost.

Laurent was not fit enough to play against Chile, but is convinced that France deserved at least to draw. With only one team from each group qualifying for the semi-finals, the French were eliminated. Of the four European entries, only Yugoslavia reached the semi-finals, where they came unstuck by 6-1 against Uruguay.

After Laurent and his team-mates had forlornly made the tedious two-week journey home, they found their deeds had barely made the French newspapers. The honours had gone, in their absence, to Uruguay – the first of five host nations to win the ultimate crown (the others being Italy in 1934, England in 1966, West Germany in 1974 and Argentina in 1978).

Four years later when the championships were staged in Italy, Laurent was absent because of an ankle injury. Again the French fared badly, losing 3-2 to Austria in a 'sudden death' first round and were knocked out. They were present again in 1938 as the host nation, and reached the quarter-finals only to lose 3-1 to the eventual winners, Italy.

By then Laurent had retired, having scored only one more goal for his country in 11 further matches between 1930 and 1935. This was in 1931, when France defeated England 5-2. He was never considered much of a marksman, mostly being used as a winger or inside-forward.

After leaving Sochaux he played for Athletic Club Paris – with his brother and fellow-international, Jean – Mulhouse, Rennes and Strasbourg.

When war broke out Laurent joined the forces. He was captured in 1942 and spent three years as a prisoner. On returning home to Besancon he became coach to the local club and continued to coach small amateur outfits until 1957, when he took over running a bar. Retirement came in 1972 – but only from daily work, not from football.

He continued enjoying his weekly matches in the watchmakers' town at the foot of the Jura mountains. Between noon and one o'clock, he would join the enthusiastic band of football fanatics of all ages with the weekly stake of a slap-up lunch to which the losers would treat the winners.

Over the years the professionals who have impressed him most are Di Stefano, Puskas, Pele, Cruyff and Maradona, and he considers the Brazilian and Hungarian teams of the 1950s as the best ever in terms of flair and teamwork.

Not all aspects of the modern game please him. He says: "Teams play much more negatively. There isn't enough consideration for each other among players – both team-mates and opponents. I suppose money is the reason. There's too much of it for the good of the game. That's why we get all these fouls, the shirt-pulling, free-kick after free-kick ,and almost every five minutes someone is rolling around just pretending to be hurt. Football suffers because of it."

Laurent always has stuck to the old training principle of "healthy body, healthy mind". He says: "I have had only this rule: always keep a sense of humour, take life as it comes and make the most of it."

That has been all the stimulant Laurent has ever needed. He has never taken as much as a simple headache tablet – even though his son is a chemist. Indeed, it is only in the past few years that, quite remarkably for a Frenchman, he has taken the odd glass of wine.

Just in time, perhaps, for the World Cup's first goalscorer to toast the first French world champions?

World Cup legends Just Fontaine

Long-playing record

Keir Radnedge meets a French veteran whose World Cup achievement will never be beaten

FRANCE scored a World Cup hat-trick long ago. Jules Rimet was the driving force behind the event's creation, Lucien Laurent scored the first goal and nobody will ever go close to equalling – never mind overtaking – Just Fontaine's record of 13 goals in a finals tournament, in 1958.

Ronaldo may boast that this is his ambition but he knows, just as well as the journalists who seize on his soundbite, that he is talking for headlines, not for real. In today's pragmatic football, coaches such as Mario Zagallo do not want their star strikers even thinking about such records.

"The game has changed since 1958," says Brazil coach Zagallo, a World Cup winner in Sweden that year. "In our day we had more time, more space, more freedom. Nowadays, football is more than ever a team game. Even the forwards must work to create openings for their team-mates. I don't want selfish players. They are no good for the team and no good for results."

The Fontaine story was remarkable because of the elements of coincidence which provided him with one glorious summer. He was, indeed, a shooting star both literally and figuratively because nothing he had done before, and nothing he did in the few years injury later permitted him, approached his achievements in 1958.

Fontaine was not even born in France but in Marrakesh, Morocco, then under French rule, on August 18, 1933. That was where he learned his football and developed his technique on bone-hard sand pitches while playing for local club AC Marrakesh before moving to USM Casablanca.

He was discovered by Nice, but bought by Reims – then the leading club in France – as replacement for Raymond Kopa, the little creative genius who joined Real Madrid after they had beaten Reims in the 1956 Champions Cup Final.

Fontaine was a surprise choice for the 1958 World Cup. He had played only twice for France and had missed most of the season because of knee trouble. Not until the middle of February was he back on duty with his club. Indeed, he went to the finals expecting to be reserve to Reims team-mate Rene Bliard, but Bliard was injured on the eve of the tournament and Fontaine took his opportunity in record-breaking style.

The majority of his goals – a hat-trick against Paraguay, two against Yugoslavia, one against Scotland, two against Northern Ireland in the quarter-finals, one in the semi-final defeat by Brazil and four in the third place play-off against West Germany – he owed to Kopa's creative work alongside him.

He could have scored more. Fontaine recalls: "I even let someone else take a penalty in our last match because in those days there was no golden boot or financial prizes such as players can earn now."

The following season, 1958-59, Fontaine was top scorer in the Champions Cup with 10 goals. Reims again reached the final and, again, lost to Real Madrid. French consolation was that, after the match, Reims negotiated Kopa's return, but the partnership which had laid waste to so many defences in the World Cup was never seen at its prolific best at club level.

Sadly, Fontaine had to retire in 1961 after two double fractures of a leg. He had twice been top League scorer and netted 27 goals in 20 internationals. Later, he was president of the French players' union and, briefly, national manager. But his fame rests on a record-breaking achievement which earned far less attention in 1958 than it would have done today.

On the case... Just Fontaine

Fontaine, says: "In those days centre-forwards were expected to score a lot of goals. It went with the shirt number. But in helped enormously in that we played with five forwards. Now, it is a miracle if you find a team playing with three. The media pressure was much less then too, which is another burden for players like Ronaldo and Alan Shearer."

Intriguingly, Fontaine thinks Shearer may have a fitness advantage over Ronaldo at France 98. He says: "Ronaldo has been playing all season for Inter, chasing the championship and the UEFA Cup, and has been flying around the world to play as many games as he can for Brazil. That has worn him down. After all, he is still only 21. You may not see it now, but you may see it as the World Cup goes on.

"Shearer will not suffer in the same way, which may make things easier for him. By the time most players get through their third group game the edge has gone off their fitness, they are playing on adrenalin. It is all about mental strength and technique. But Alan may be fresher than the rest because he has missed so much of this season through injury – just as I did in 1958."

But the man whose goals win his country the World Cup cannot do it single-handedly. Fontaine never fails to acknowledge the debt he owed Kopa for the slide-rule passes through flat, open, "old-fashioned" defences.

"Any country who play their top scorer up front alone will have no chance of winning the World Cup," warns Fontaine. "Every top striker depends on a partner. Brazil are so dangerous because they have Ronaldo and Romario, each a great player with wonderful technique and ability in the goal area – and the Brazilians create between four and six real chances per game. But those chances cannot all fall to the same player."

After all, despite Fontaine's record haul, it was not France who won the World Cup in 1958, but Brazil.

Four for France...Fontaine is held aloft by team-mates after netting four against West Germany

arsenal versus man utd. a meaningless game with absolutely no bearing on the title.

Coventry v Southampton is the one that could clinch it for you, or perhaps, Leicester's visit to Wimbledon. You see when you play Fantasy League Professional, every premiership game is as important as the next. The dreariest, mid week, mid season, mid table, no score draw can be the 6-point key to the title (that's two clean sheets). Fancy yourself as the new Arsene Wenger? Then give us a ring, get your mates round, get the beers in and get going. You can even play on the Net. But remember the original fantasy football game isn't like the newspaper ones. Only one of you will get Alan Shearer. Of course, we don't believe in big summer signings. So call now and we'll let you play the first month of the new season on a free trial.

PROFESSIONAL fantasy league PROFESSIONAL

how can you manage without it?

0171 387 0099
www.fantasyleague.co.uk

Six of the best

Half a dozen stars to shine in France

RONALDO
On top of the world

Dominique Antognoni talks to 'The Phenomenon'

Ronaldo, what will be the difference for you between the 1994 World Cup and this summer's tournament?
Well, I hope to play a few games in France!

In 1994 in the United States, you did not play even a single minute. Did you still consider yourself a world champion?
Of course. It's true I would have liked to have played a little, but the trainer then, Carlos Alberto Parreira, decided otherwise. The choice was justified because in the end we won.

When you say Brazil will win the World Cup, do you speak as a fan or as a football expert?
Firstly as a fan, but I think that's an advantage. You play with a greater desire when you know your heart is beating strong and that every full step will affect you on a personal level, and not only on the level of the result itself.

Everyone expects this to be Ronaldo's World Cup. Do you agree?
You can't win the World Cup playing by yourself. I think these people are exaggerating a little.

Is all this responsibility weighing you down?
Actually, no. Really, it gives me greater motivation. I like the situation where I am considered the main player, the main person involved. I work for this every day and I can react to the pressure. I think I'm ready to go to the World Cup and help Brazil to win.

How are you so calm? Lots of players have cracked when they have a great weight on their shoulders, yet you are always calm...
It's one of my characteristics and I was like this when I started out. I consider myself a lucky person, in fact very lucky. And that is why I am so calm.

In 1958, a young man by the name of Pele helped Brazil to their first World Cup victory. Now, 40 years later, you could be the second. Do you think about this?
Certainly it's one more motivation. I've been compared to Pele for some years. At first I thought it was just hype, but now I see we are beginning to be quite similar.

How do you see this World Cup?
Well, I think it's going to be a balanced contest, hopefully with a strong Brazil side winning the title for the fifth time.

What do you consider to be this Brazilian side's greatest strengths?
We're a group of great friends, a team with some great players with fantastic individual ability.

Mario Zagallo, the coach, wants to play with a much more attacking style. Is that a bit risky?
Brazil have always had great attackers, we're always ready to attack. We have plenty of skillful players in attack, so perhaps it's better to concentrate on this system. It's like in Italy where teams concentrate on the defence, a tradition which has always produced fantastic results.

With yourself and Romario up front, and Giovanni and Rivaldo behind, the team could be unbalanced. Will the side suffer in defence?
For the first time in our history we've got a great defence. Cafu, Aldair, Cruz and Roberto Carlos are exceptional players and they give us great security. And then don't forget that in midfield we've got a certain Dunga, who has so much experience, and Cesar Sampaio who runs and sacrifices himself for the team. No, I don't think we're unbalanced. Also, it's not the 4-2-4 of 40 years ago. The strikers get back and help out in midfield and, if need be, also in defence.

Romario doesn't run much. We know that because of his age...
It's true but he's important there in attack. He's very clever and he must play.

Many say that the ideal pairing up front for Brazil could be Ronaldo and Edmundo. Would you agree with that?
Maybe after the World Cup. It's a problem because we haven't had much time to work together, we've only played a few minutes at the Maracana against Argentina. Romario and I have known each other for four years already.

This season, you've played a huge amount of games for your club, Inter Milan, and you've often gone backwards and forwards from Italy to play for the national team. Aren't you tired?
Tired, how? A footballer dreams all his life about these sort of things. I'm a professional and I've made great sacrifices to get where I am, and I certainly can't say that I'm tired. There will be time for rest after the 12th of July. Life asks sacrifices of you. Otherwise you wouldn't get anywhere.

Zico was one of your idols and now you're working closely with him as he is part of the Brazilian coaching staff. What effect does that have on you?
I'm very happy but I have one regret: that I'm not able to play alongside him.

You've just finished your first season in Italy. What do you make of life in Serie A?
I've had an absolutely stupendous season. We won the UEFA Cup, we fought for the title right up to the last round of games, and we almost won it but we were shut out by the referees. There was a sad episode which makes you change your ideas about football. It's no fun playing when it's eleven against twelve. However, we also messed up because we lost home games against Bari and Bologna which cost us dear. With those six points, Juventus could have had the help of the referee for as long as they wanted, we would have been out of reach. I hope to win the Scudetto next year.

Do you like the Italian championship?
Yes, very much so. This year I've had my best championship season and it's been a wonderful adventure with lots of competitive teams. It's been very even and fascinating.

Having also played for Barcelona, do you think there is a difference between the Italian and Spanish championships?
Yes, yes. In Spain, there isn't the balance between the first and the last teams. Here in Italy it's as difficult to play against Juventus as it is to play against Napoli. In terms of preparation and tactics, there's a notable balance. In Spain it's different, and here in Italy an attacker's life is much harder. Teams play very tightly in defence in Italy. In Spain you often see results like 5-4 and 5-3. In Italy you don't.

Last summer everyone was saying that Italy was a different world and that you wouldn't score as many goals. But you've scored 25. Weren't you scared of failing?
No. Inter bought me to score goals and I've always done that. It's my speciality. Every day I work to improve and to score more. I'm sure I'll do better next year.

But how do you score so many? For instance, why don't you ever miss when you're one-on-one with the goalkeeper?
Because I'm very calm. I've always been like that.

Did you always score so many goals like that when you were a kid?
Yes, I didn't like to study at school. I knew football was my only hope.

You finished second in the Italian scoring charts behind the German striker Oliver Bierhoff, at Udinese. Will the title of top scorer at the World Cup be fought out between the two of you?
I hope so. Oliver is a great striker and has completed a fantastic seaso. He deserved to be top of the goalscorers list, but I hope to be top scorer at the World Cup.

Who will be the most crucial players in the World Cup?
The same as always. I see a World Cup with a lot of stars.

Naturally, only one team can win the World Cup. What is it they will need to have to finish ahead of the others?
A little bit of luck.

You have often been referred to as a phenomenon. Is Ronaldo a phenomenon?
What an exaggeration! I'm not a phenomenon, just a 21-year-old footballer who still has a lot to learn.

Ready for action...Alessandro Del Piero

DEL PIERO
Ready to dazzle in France

Italy's Golden Boy talks to Dominique Antognioni

You have had a wonderful season with Juventus. How do you fancy your chances in France with Italy?
It's a great event, obviously. My first, but I hope not my last. But I haven't got a regular place in the Italy team. I'm not guaranteed one just because my name's Del Piero.

How do you explain the fact that you're often left out of the starting 11?
Italy have plenty of high-quality players. Newcomers need time to get adjusted to the set-up and the system of play. I'm very young, and although I think I have shown good quality in my international games, I realise that there are plenty of others competing for places – even Baggio and Zola, who have had such bad luck with injuries, aren't out of it. But I feel comfortable about my form. The right moment might have come for me to be really appreciated at national level.

Why have things gone so well for you this season?
This has been my first season without injuries. I've been able to train continuously instead of having to go for treatment. I've been well treated by the media and my team-mates, which helps me to have confidence in my own strengths. And don't forget that this is my fourth year in Serie A, so I'm quite experienced now.

You've become a key man in the national squad. How does that feel?
I try to stay at peace with myself, feet on the ground. I was like that when I was on the way up, an ordinary player, and now that I'm a bit different I try not to get carried away, though it's not easy to maintain your balance, mentally. Luckily, thanks to the way my parents taught me, I think I can handle the fame in the right manner. Every time I go on the field I long to give the best of myself – and being a Juventus player means you can't take things easy. Sparing yourself is forbidden.

What about you and Ronaldo? How do you compare?
No, no, no! I don't want to make such comparisons, nor hear them.

But they're of interest to the whole soccer community...
I've never considered one player to be all-important. In football you win or lose together, as a team. I've scored frequently for Juve, and made some goals as well, but I couldn't do it without the others in the side, the defenders and the midfielders. And the keeper.

But there's still room for individual genius in a team game...
People say that Maradona won the 1986 World Cup for Argentina by himself. What a mistake! He was in an extraordinary team, he didn't play opponents on his own. Talking so much about forwards is an insult to defenders.

OK, it's a team game – so how does a team win a World Cup?
Your team's collective output must amount to more than the others. Your men must be united, and you must believe that you can win, believe that more strongly than the others.

Are you worried that you might feel exhausted in France?
No. Absolutely not. These are the matches you've been waiting for since last summer's training. At this stage you don't feel tiredness.

How do you rate the Italy team?
We have great potential, no weak spots. When we're together we leave our personal troubles at home, and our club problems at the club. But we'll miss Ciro Ferrara, who won't be fit in time after injury. That was a blow to the team as well as to him. He's one of those players who gives the others confidence.

Which players will be outstanding in France?
Roberto Carlos of Brazil and Marcelo Salas of Chile.

Will there be a duel between Del Piero and Ronaldo in the Final?
Yes. Do you feel better now?

RAUL GONZALEZ
Spain's great attacking hope

The millions wait for the kid to take off and fly like the Vulture

ALL SPAIN is hoping that a 'veteran' 20-year-old can cap his meteoric rise by taking their team to World Cup glory this summer.

Real Madrid striker Raul Gonzalez turns 21 on June 27, the day the knockout phase begins, but in footballing terms he came of age long ago.

He would rather somebody else was the main focus of his country's hopes, recalling that Julen Guerrero, then also 20, was given the playmaker's job at the 1994 World Cup, but crumbled under the pressure.

Unfortunately, Raul has not been in the best of form this season. He has been troubled by a groin injury for months, which led him to take the unusual step of calling a media conference to explain the reasons for his bad patch.

"In a few months from now I've got the most important date in my career," said Raul, referring to the World Cup. But reporters seemed uninterested in his performances on the pitch, and instead quizzed the youngster about girlfriends and an alleged fondness for nightclubs. Such questions are now inevitable for somebody who appears as much in the gossip columns as in the sports pages, but Raul has dealt with all the fuss in an extraordinarily mature manner.

He began his career at Atletico Madrid – his mother and father are diehard fans of the club – and crossed the Spanish capital to rivals Real only when Atletico owner Jesus Gil axed his junior teams as a cost-cutting measure.

'The Spanish press were so impressed by the young player's enthusiasm and ability that they dubbed the six-times European champions "Raul Madrid"'

These junior teams included the Under-14s, who scored 308 goals in one season, with Raul claiming 65 of them.

After shooting plenty of goals with Real's junior outfits, and shooting up to near the 6ft mark, Raul was an obvious contender for a senior chance, although nobody expected it to come as soon as it did. In October 1994, he was plucked from Real's third team and dropped in against Real Zaragoza at the age of 17 years and four months – which made him the youngest first-team player in Real Madrid's history.

The man behind the decision to include him, coach Jorge Valdano, stood by him after a poor debut, and was rewarded when Raul knocked in a fine goal in his second match – against, ironically, Atletico.

Since then the sky has been the limit for Raul. The Spanish press were so impressed by his enthusiasm and ability that they dubbed the six-times European champions 'Raul Madrid'.

Valdano has since moved on from the Bernabeu Stadium, but maintains his position as unofficial mentor to the young striker. "He's entitled to a slump," said Valdano earlier this season. "It's his first in three years."

At past World Cups Spain have struggled to produce the kind of really decisive players who can make the difference on soccer's biggest stage. Raul's former Real Madrid team-mate Emilio 'Vulture' Butragueno was one exception. His four goals against Denmark in the 1986 World Cup earned him instant legendary status. Valdano has said that hailing Raul as 'the new Butragueno' – after the kid had taken over and consigned the Vulture to a place on the perch – could be the worst thing people could do to him.

But if Raul can peak at the right time, there is a growing confidence among Spaniards that he can emulate Emilio this summer.

Keir Radnedge

Great expectations...Raul

SCHOLES: Running for Hoddle till he drops

Kevin Palmer on the quiet, Manchester youngster who could hold England's key

THE RARE taste of defeat was sampled by Manchester United's young stars this year, as they ended the season for the first time with no domestic silverware. Yet the heartbreak of surrendering the title will be quickly forgotten if the Old Trafford contingent can inspire England to glory in France.

With up to six United players set to contribute to the World Cup effort, their loss of form in the closing months of the Premiership could be viewed as fatal to England's confidence. However, as coach Glenn Hoddle built his qualification success in no small measure around the deposed champions, radical changes to the squad at this late stage cannot be considered.

Paul Scholes...England's finest

United by their club, the individual characters of the players concerned could not be more contrasting. In Teddy Sheringham, whose loss of form has hit hardest of all, and David Beckham – both almost certain to start in England's opener against Tunisia – are two stars living the champagne football lifestyle that befits the world's biggest club. Whereas, in the Neville brothers club and country have a couple of well-spoken, reliable defenders who go about their duties quietly with little fuss. Then there is Nicky Butt, the less experienced of the group who may find himself confined to the fringes of the squad in France, and the player many view as the best of the crop, Paul Scholes.

Scholes looks set to play a key role for England. Although surplus to requirements in many of Alex Ferguson's selections at United, he appears to be a first choice for Hoddle.

"Paul has always been one of the quieter lads in our dressing room, but that isn't a bad thing," says Ferguson. "He is a very strong person which is important if you are going to succeed at this level. He shares a similar personality to Nicky Butt, no question.

"They both come from the same sort of background, typically working class, and they have never known this sort of success before, but neither has let it go to his head. They have looked to be great prospects for a while now and they are being given a chance to prove it with England."

Scholes's red hair and slight build, his ability to run all day and an iron will to succeed, bring predictable comparisons with England's 1966 World Cup winner, Alan Ball. Yet the 23-year-old Scholes arguably possesses more natural talent than Ball, and he will have the chance to prove it in France.

"There are certain players who will be more suited to international football than club level and perhaps Scholes is one of those," Hoddle says. "He is an intelligent player and he has proved to be a top-class finisher. Paul has a very exciting future."

While no doubt delighted by such praise, Scholes is not slow to acknowledge the influences of those around him. "If the manager thinks well of you then you really are doing OK," Scholes says shyly. "I only hope I can live up to it. I'm determined to do so, and hopefully some day I'll be as good as the top stars.

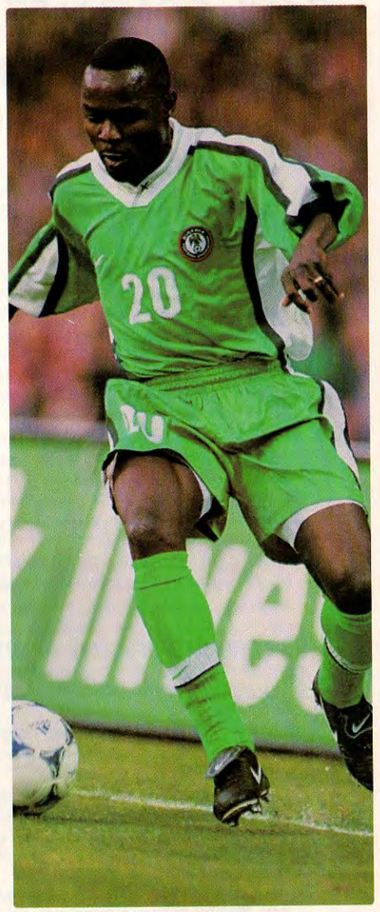
"We all learned such a lot from having Eric Cantona at Manchester United. He had so much ability you couldn't help but benefit. I try to emulate what he did, but I have my own ideas, too. I like to play up front, just off the first two. Playing there you get to know where everyone else is on the pitch, so you can play them in. But when I get the ball, my first instinct is to look for the centre-forward."

Off the field, however, not everything comes easy for Salford-born Scholes, who uses an inhaler to overcome occasional breathing problems. A private young man, he doesn't enjoy the limelight and his discomfort in front of the cameras is evident in his shy, almost embarrassed post-match appraisals.

Yet he has no reason to feel uneasy in front of a media who have been eager to show their approval. It is a positive endorsement backed up by many within the game, including Sir Bobby Charlton. "Paul is a wonderful little player with all the skills in the world and a great eye for goal," says the 1966 World Cup-winner. "I looked at him playing for England out in the Tournoi last summer and I knew we had something special on our hands.

"We always knew he was going to be good as he came through our ranks at Manchester United, but he looks like going all the way."

High praise indeed.



Count him in...Nigeria's Ikpeba

IKPEBA: Swooping for a bigger prize

Dominique Baldy finds Super Eagles' confidence high

AFTER their Olympic triumph in Atlanta two years ago, Nigerian hopes are high that the team will be claiming an even bigger prize this summer. The bulk of the Super Eagles' gold-medal winners who overpowered Argentinian and Brazilian sides en route to their success will again be in France. That in itself is grounds for optimism.

For the Nigerian supporting public success may be a foregone conclusion, but striker Victor Ikpeba, the reigning African Footballer of the Year, insists that the players have their feet firmly on the ground. They go to France determined to avoid a repetition of their less-than-happy visit to the United States four years ago.

"In the States, we were knocked out in the second round by Italy because once we went ahead, we stopped concentrating and allowed them back into the game," says the Monaco-based forward.

"We believe we are capable of winning the World Cup, but that's not to say we think it is already won. We are stronger now than last time and we showed in Atlanta that we are mentally tougher. We never give up – against Brazil, we were 3-1 down with 15 minutes to play and still came back to win, which shows what fighting spirit we have in the team."

The Brazil team beaten by Nigeria was by no means a weakened side and included Ronaldo, Roberto Carlos and Bebeto. "Beating such a team," Ikpeba adds, "means that the people expect us to win. But there are 31 other teams with the same idea, so we will not be treating any opposition lightly."

Still only 25, this will be Ikpeba's second World Cup. Now playing in his eighth year in Europe and happily settled at Monaco after a spell with Liege in Belgium whom he joined form his home side, Benin City, he is also a veteran of two African Nations Cups and was voted the 1997 African Player of the Year. With his great pace down either flank, superb control and his eye for goal, he should be among the eye-catchers in France, his adopted country, this summer.

The football omens are promising for Nigeria, but in what has become a predictable inevitability there have been disruptions behind the scenes that may yet clip the Eagles' wings. First was the Nigerian Federation's decision to dismiss the coach who had guided the side through the qualifiers, Frenchman Phillipe Troussier. The disruption to the squad, however, was softened by the subsequent appointment of Bora Milutinovic one of the canniest coaches in international football.

"It's a shame the coaches keep changing, but that is down to the federation, not the players," says Ikpeba. "But Bora is well experienced, and nobody pushes him round, which makes him a good man to have on our side. I don't think tactics will change much, we will continue to play good, attacking football. But we conceded too many goals in our last two games in Atlanta and we must work harder, and make sure we defend all over the pitch when we don't have the ball."

On a more personal note, and perhaps more pressing is the vexed question of outstanding bonuses due to the squad for achieving qualification.

"What we asked for was very little compared to what European teams get," says Ikpeba. "Money's not the reason we're going, but it's a problem we can do without. It's typical of Nigeria, and I only hope we can resolve it before our first game."

The biggest problem of all however could be that as a team, the Super Eagles have had little experience against top opponents of late, due to their suspension from the African Nations Cup, a relatively easy qualifying group through to France, and international sanctions against the country's military dictatorship.

"We haven't played enough tough matches lately, and it's a shame that we weren't at the African Nations Cup," acknowledges Ikpeba. "But fortunately most of our players are competing at the very highest level in Europe, at clubs like Inter, Ajax and Stuttgart, which shows we are well respected as footballers. And we played well in our recent friendly with Germany.

"I believe we are capable of competing with the best, so don't count us out."

BERGKAMP: The mental master

John Holmesdale meets a player in form and totally focussed for the big one

Cool under pressure...Bergkamp takes responsibility

IN TERMS of the strongest teams on show in France, Holland may not be held in the same awe as they once were, but surely that is to discount the brilliance of Dennis Bergkamp. England may be favoured by the bookies more than the Dutch, yet Bergkamp's form with Premiership champions Arsenal this season suggests that he is in a different league from anyone Glenn Hoddle can choose this summer.

Voted England's Player of the Year by both the press and the players, the affable Bergkamp seems primed to take hold of a major tournament for the first time in his career.

The English way of life seems to be bringing the best out of a player who has always had the talent to be one of the best frontmen in the world, yet all too often failed to deliver when it was most required.

"It might have something to do with my fitness levels this season," says Bergkamp, whose quiet tone belies the fact that he has attracted the attentions of numerous referees this season and mainly for the wrong reasons. "I had a longer break last summer – around six weeks – and that allowed me to start the season feeling fresh. The way the game is being played just now, especially in England, you need time to recover during the summer and I got that last time for the first time in many years."

Barely recognisable from the player who so often failed to reach top form during his time at Inter, Bergkamp has found his home in England and a bond with his manager, Arsene Wenger, who was only too happy to build a team around the Dutchman's exquisite talents. With his reputation once again restored to that of his early career at Ajax, Bergkamp's thoughts are focused on the World Cup and, surprisingly, he confirms that Holland's chances of success are none too good.

"We are not going to be one of the favourites and our recent form means that we don't deserve to be considered to have a great chance," he says bluntly. "But that can be a good thing. The pressure is off. In the past, we have gone into this sort of competition with people expecting us to win, and then it is difficult."

'Stamina won't be a problem for any player at the World Cup. You might feel jaded at the end of the season, but you raise yourself'

All too often in recent years internal problems have destroyed Dutch hopes of success, but Bergkamp, often seen as the peacemaker in the camp, insists that in-fighting is now a thing of the past and he is eager to confirm that this team will be able to live together for a month, if required.

"Once the 1996 European Championship was finished, we sorted out the problems in the camp and that is vital," he explains now. "It is impossible to have a winning team if there is no harmony within the squad. But we are all more experienced for the problems we have suffered in the last few years, which have been difficult for us."

Bergkamp's form will be the key to Holland's chances and despite a gruelling season, upset only by a late injury that caused him to miss the run-in, he insists he will be ready for the first game, against Belgium in Paris on June 13.

"Stamina will not be a problem for any player at the World Cup," he continues. "You might feel jaded at the end of the domestic season, but you raise yourself for the big games and I will be ready for the World Cup. We have a tough group so we have to be at our best straight away, but then every nation would say that."

Bergkamp, now 29, accepts that this may well be his last World Cup. With his fear of flying showing no signs of abating, a trip to South Korea and Japan in 2002 seems out of the question. "I will probably go to France on the train and I'm lucky it isn't that far away. I may not be able to go next time, but I am happy with the situation. I just want to concentrate on my football and not worry about aeroplanes."

There is no doubting where Bergkamp's mental energies lie.

Saint Denis...Stade de France

Money well spent

Simon Inglis discovers what the French did with £650million

SUSPECT yellow patches on the pitch of the Stade de France apart, preparations at the 10 venues for the World Cup have proceeded remarkably smoothly, and more or less on schedule.

But there may still be one or two disappointments and surprises for those lucky fans who manage to get tickets for any of the 64 matches.

Architectural optimists expecting to see a dazzling array of state-of-the-art venues that will put our own to shame, certainly will be impressed by Stade de France, the undoubted star of this summer's show. But apart from this, and perhaps Stade Velodrome in Marseille, which has been completely rebuilt – albeit on a low budget and without roofs on three sides – most elements of the French stadium refurbishment programme are quite similar to the recent developments seen at the higher levels of the British game.

Ten new stands have been built. Cantilevered roofs have replaced most of the old ones supported by columns (apart from Lens, where even two of the new stands have columns, and St Etienne). Terraces have been converted to seating, much of it bucket-type seating at that, and executive boxes are now de rigueur, as are CCTV cameras, stadium control-suites and new sound and lighting systems.

Happily, perimeter fences also have come down, apart from at St Etienne and Lens – those two again – where the local authorities could not afford the costs of re-erecting them before next season. To make matters worse, the fences at both venues, though equipped with modern electronic release gates, are certainly taller than the 2.2m limit recommended.

'One welcome surprise is the absence of the athletics track, that passion-killing feature of continental stadia'

Elsewhere, there are low fences at Stade de France and Nantes, moats at Bordeaux, Marseille and Parc des Princes, and, if all goes to plan, horizontal barriers (like those pioneered at Wembley) at Lyon, Montpellier and Toulouse.

But if little of this will raise eyebrows among British fans, what should prove quite a surprise is the complete absence of that passion-killing feature so often associated with continental stadia – the athletics track.

Believe it or not, France 98 will be the first World Cup ever staged without a single track in sight. (Stade de France does have space for a track, but nobody will see this because it will be concealed by the innovative moveable tiers, which bring the lower seats closer to the touchlines.)

One criticism which has arisen in the build-up to this summer has been the comparative size of the ten venues, particularly in view of the paucity of tickets on sale to non-French nationals.

In one respect the criticism is justified. The combined capacity of the 10 stadiums – before slight reductions for media installations during the World Cup – is 457,552, well short of the aggregate provision at Italy in 1990 (648,878) and the USA four years later (621,095).

Lyon...Stade de Gerland

Predictably, the rationale for smaller venues is the relative size of attendances at French domestic games. Apart from Lens, Marseille and Paris St Germain, few clubs attract more than 20,000-25,000 spectators. Twenty years ago, we would have been able to include St Etienne in that list, but alas, at the time of writing *Les Verts* were struggling woefully at the foot of the Second Division, watched by crowds of barely 7,000.

Even so, before any English fans start to knock the French for aiming their sights too low, it should be noted that the average capacity of their World Cup stadiums is 45,755, which is still marginally higher than the 45,272 England was able to offer spectators during Euro 96.

The refurbishment of French stadiums has been financed almost entirely from the public purse. In England, only a small percentage of post-Taylor costs in the Premiership has come from the Government, via the Football Trust.

Only one of the 10 French venues received private funding: Stade de France. This cost £267million to build, of which the French government contributed 47 per cent, with the balance provided by the private consortium of three building contractors responsible for the stadium's construction.

As reported in April's *World Soccer*, in return, the consortium has been granted a lease to operate the stadium until 2025. How they will manage to do this at a profit is very much open to question, however, especially as Paris Saint-Germain recently decided to stay put at Parc des Princes.

The most costly of the other nine venues was Stade Velodrome, where the reconstruction cost £39million. Readers may recall that back in 1994, Marseille council argued bitterly over money with the CFO (the French Organising Committee). The CFO was adamant the Marseille stadium had to accommodate 60,000, in order to meet FIFA's criteria for staging the event: the rules require at least one 60,000 capacity venue for one of the semi-finals.

Paris...Parc des Princes

The council reckoned 50,000 was more appropriate for the needs of Olympique Marseille – by which they meant more affordable – and it was only after a tense battle of wills that extra funds were extracted to attain the higher number. Even so, OM fans already have complained there is little leg room in the upper levels, and no shelter on three sides, whereas in the old stadium they at least had cover on two sides.

Elsewhere, budgets have been more modest, divided between the state, regional councils and the municipalities.

Security costs apart, the overall bill for staging this summer's tournament, including related infrastructures such as new railway stations, roads and media centres, is expected to reach £650million, spread across the 10 host cities.

To put the figure in perspective, that is roughly the equivalent of the entire cost, so far, of upgrading all 92 grounds in the Premier League and Football League since 1990.

And just to rub salt into our wounds a little more, not one of the French clubs has been asked to cough up a single centime.

Lens...Stade Felix-Bollaert

THE TEN VENUES

SAINT DENIS

Stadium: Stade de France
Capacity: 80,000
Opened: January 28, 1998, France v. Spain (friendly)
Building costs: £267million for whole site, excluding rail links.
Summary of works: New stadium, including exhibition hall, two restaurants, shops and offices plus adjoining training stadium, multiplex cinema, retail centre, fast-food restaurant, new railway station plus two others upgraded, road link system and parking for 6,000 cars.

PARIS

Stadium: Parc des Princes
Capacity: 48,590
Opened: July 1897, but completely rebuilt in 1932 and 1972
World Cup renovation costs: £5.4million
Summary of works: New VIP suites, signage and technical installations (scoreboards, sound, lights, dressings-rooms and media), extra spaces for disabled supporters and new tip-up seating throughout.

Bordeaux...Parc de Lescure

BORDEAUX

Stadium: Parc de Lescure
Capacity: 36,500
Opened: June 12, 1938 (for the World Cup quarter-final, Brazil v Czechoslovakia)
World Cup renovation costs: £6.2million
Summary of works: New technical installations (ticketing, lights, dressing-rooms), refurbished outer concourses, new media centre (to be used as school sports hall after World Cup), new VIP access to main stand, and seats installed on former lower tier terraces behind each goal.

Saint Etienne...Stade Geoffroy-Guichard

LENS
Stadium: Stade Felix-Bollaert
Capacity: 41,649
Opened: June 1934
World Cup renovation costs: £14.1million
Summary of works: New two-tiered stands behind each goal, extended main stand with lounges, boxes and technical installations. Upgraded fourth stand and extensive remodelling of surrounding car parks and approaches.

Montpellier...Stade de la Mosson

LYON
Stadium: Stade de Gerland
Capacity: 43,895
Opened: 1926
World Cup renovation costs: £8.7million
Summary of works: New two-tiered stands behind each goal, bringing spectators closer to pitch. Upgrading of both side stands, with new boxes, media facilities, security systems and dressing-rooms. Landscaping and restoration of surrounding esplanade, with new access roads and temporary media centre.

MARSEILLE
Stadium: Stade Velodrome
Capacity: 60,000
Opened: June 13, 1937 (Olympique Marseille v Torino)
World Cup renovation costs: £39million
Summary of works: Three stands, plus extension and re-roofing of main stand (including additional tier, boxes, dressing-rooms, VIP lounges, a restaurant and media facilities). New floodlights, scoreboards, security systems, club museum and boutique, remodelling of piazza in front of the stadium and of car parks on opposite side.

MONTPELLIER
Stadium: Stade de la Mosson
Capacity: 35,500
Opened: 1900, but redeveloped from 1987-90
World Cup renovation costs: £9.4million
Summary of works: Three-tier, uncovered stand on east side, plus two linking corner stands. Upgrading of existing three stands, including technical installations (sound, light, ticketing system, scoreboards, signage and security systems). New Press and television centre. Extension of car parks. New pitch, extended to cater for rugby matches.

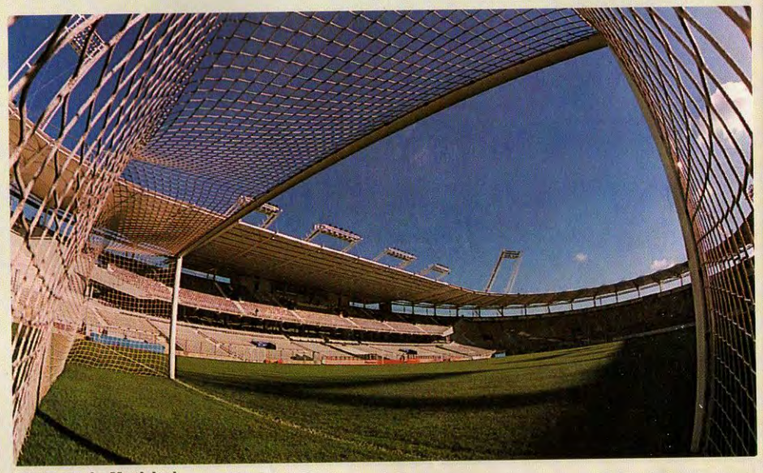
NANTES
Stadium: Stade de la Beaujoire (also known as Stade Louis Fonteneau)
Capacity: 39,500
Opened: May 8, 1984, Nantes v Romania
World Cup renovation costs: £4.3million
Summary of works: Re-profiling and extension of lower tiers behind goals at both ends of ground, plus addition of plexiglass screens to reduce effect of wind and draughts, for increased spectator comfort. New boxes erected in main stand along with upgraded technical installations (sound, lighting, scoreboard, signage and security systems). Also, number of improvements carried out to pitch drainage and irrigation systems.

Nantes...Stade de la Beaujoire

SAINT ETIENNE
Stadium: Stade Geoffroy-Guichard
Capacity: 35,924
Opened: September 13, 1931
World Cup renovation costs: £9.8million
Summary of works: Conversion of terraces behind each goal to seating. Upper tier and new roof added to East Stand. Extension and new roof for main stand. Technical installations (sound, light, scoreboard, signage and security systems). New pitch and extensive landscaping to surrounds, including new road access.

TOULOUSE
Stadium: Le Municipal
Capacity: 37,532
Opened: 1949
World Cup renovation costs: £17million
Summary of works: Extra tier behind main stand, with boxes and six-storey service block to rear. New seats. Replacement of roof with Teflon-coated fabric cover, on steel cantilevered frame, with roof-mounted floodlights. Technical installations (sound, light and security). Upgrading of adjoining swimming pool.
***Capacities are all-seater and subject to minor reductions for World Cup matches.**

Marseille...Stade Velodrome


Toulouse...Le Municipal

William HILL INTERNATIONAL

TAX FREE* BETTING

No one can match us ...

William Hill is the most respected name in bookmaking, one that is synonymous with integrity and quality.

As the established market leaders for telephone betting we now offer all the benefits of this personal, confidential and efficient service TAX FREE to non UK residents.

You can bet 7 days a week on all major international sports including football, horse racing, golf and many others. Our highly professional staff will handle all transactions with discretion and confidentiality.

Please contact us today - we will be pleased to send details of our exclusive TAX FREE betting service.*
**Available to non UK residents only.*

For further information about opening an account

TEL: +1624 618388
FAX: +1624 618384
Internet: http://www.williamhill.co.im
Full details will be sent by return.

William HILL INTERNATIONAL

FIRST FOR TAX FREE BETTING

William Hill International, Celtic House, Victoria Street, Douglas, Isle of Man IM1 2LR.

WORLD CUP BETTING

The World's greatest sporting event starts on June 10th. Open a Tax Free betting account NOW and be ready to add to the excitement with a bet with William Hill.

I sometimes wonder what I could have achieved if I had bought some good quality Reebok training kit instead of that cheap nylon rubbish. Peter Schmeichel. Pig farmer. Gladsaxe Denmark.

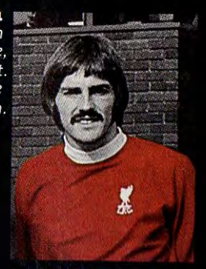
Reebok

THERE IS OTHER KIT.
BUT THEN THERE ARE OTHER CAREERS.

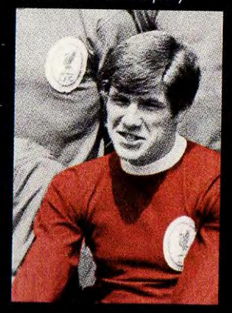
©1997 REEBOK INTERNATIONAL LTD. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. REEBOK AND ® REGISTERED TRADEMARKS. http://www.uk.reebok.com

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

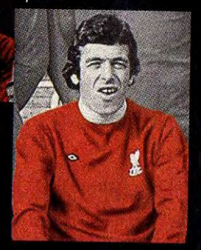
Steve Heighway 70-81
The pudding basin haircut may have gone, but "Big Bamber" hasn't. He's still at Liverpool, as the Director of Youth.



Emlyn Hughes 66-79
Crazy Horse captained Liverpool and England. But his ultimate triumph was leading his side on "A Question of Sport." He now runs a corporate entertainment company.

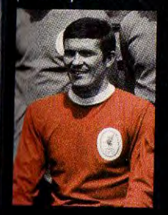


Ian Callaghan 59-78
Went on to pick up an MBE. Still showing skill and precision, as a member of Littlewoods' "Spot the Ball" panel.



Ian St John 61-71
The Saint teamed up with that funny bald bloke on TV. But now he's a pundit for ITV and Radio City.

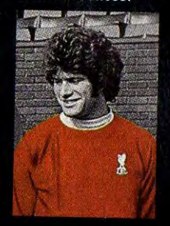
Ron Yeats 61-71
Nicknamed "Rowdy" after Clint Eastwood's TV cowboy. He now tracks down sharpshooters as chief scout for Liverpool FC.



Tony Hateley 67-69
The "H-Bomber" has hung up his boots and is now retired living in Preston.

Willie Stevenson 62-68
Always capable of a polished performance. Especially now he runs a contract cleaning service in Macclesfield.

Phil Boersma 69-76
An early proponent of the "Afro-Perm" look. Boey can now be found coaching Benfica FC, alongside that other fan of the curly hairstyle, Graeme Souness.



Geoff Strong 64-70
A great all-rounder, Strongy is now in the hotel fitting & furnishing business in Liverpool.

Peter Cormack 72-76
Provided the side with a bit of gloss. Now runs a painting and decorating firm in Edinburgh.

Alf Arrowsmith 61-68
"The Arrow" now keeps a tight defence, as a part-time security guard in Manchester.

John Toshack 70-78
In his day, Toshy was one of Liverpool's young turks. Now he's gone to join them, as manager of Besiktas FC, Istanbul.

Peter Thompson 63-72
Pancho is in a different "game of two halves" now, as owner of the Hare & Hounds pub, Windermere.

Roger Hunt 59-70
"Sir Roger" went on to a career in the haulage business. Now an after dinner speaker.

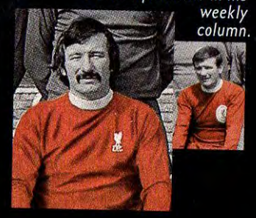
Bobby Graham 64-72
Often dogged by injury, the young Scot wore the red shirt 123 times. Now living in Motherwell.

Chris Lawler 62-76
He helped the Reds climb the ladder. Now he climbs one himself, working for a roofing & building company.

Roy Evans 69-74
The hair has turned a shade of grey since his days as a skillful left-back. Being the boss probably had something to do with it.

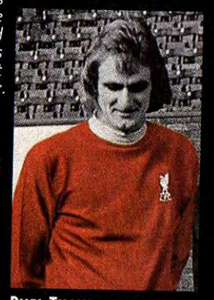
Bill Shankly 59-74
Although Shanks is now gone, his spirit will always live on at Anfield.

Tommy Smith 62-78
The "Iron Man" still makes the pages of the Liverpool Echo in his weekly column.



Doug Livermore 67-71
A useful midfielder, he now sits in the Anfield dugout as assistant manager.

Ronnie Moran 52-65
Both Ronnie and the Reds have seen promotion since their Division Two days. He is now the club's chief coach.



Phil Thompson 71-83
Tommo is still showing he can "do-it-all" as a partner in a Kirkby DIY store. He is also a pundit for Sky TV.

Gerry Byrne 57-69
Gerry was a craftsman on the pitch, and off. He became a self-employed joiner, before retiring to Prestatyn.

Brian Hall 68-76
"Little Bamber" (like "Big Bamber" a degree holder) is back at Anfield putting his brains to good use as PR manager and Community officer.

Alec Lindsay 69-77
After serving his team as a brilliant left-back, "Linds" is now serving pints at The Foundry Arms at Leigh Lancashire.

The classic Liverpool shirt
Had a distinguished career in the Shankly days. Now making a comeback at sports stores around the country.

©1998 REEBOK INTERNATIONAL LTD. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. REEBOK AND ARE REGISTERED TRADEMARKS. For more information on your nearest stockist, contact 01524 580 100. http://www.reebok.com. photographs; popperfoto.

Reebok

Great expectations...Brazil go to France as firm favourites

HOW THEY QUALIFIED

AUTOMATICALLY, AS HOLDERS

A foregone conclusion?

With a little freedom, the champions should do what's expected

BRAZIL'S limitations as a team were there for all to see when they were beaten by Argentina in April at the Maracana in what is likely to be their final game before the World Cup.

In terms of individual talent, no other country can come close to matching the defending, four-times champions. Yet when they took on Argentina, Brazil were still far from settled on their ideal team and their lack of cohesion and understanding was cruelly exposed in a 1-0 defeat.

A week after the game manager Mario Zagallo responded in surprising style by not only announcing the final squad for France, but also the team that will face Scotland on June 10.

His aim, apart from stopping speculation as to who would play, is to give himself time to work with the chosen 11: Taffarel, Cafu, Aldair, Junior Baiano, Roberto Carlos, Dunga, Cesar Sampaio, Giovanni, Rivaldo, Ronaldo and Romario.

The initiative, in which Zagallo's assistant Zico appears to have played a part, won all-round praise, not just for the idea itself but also for the team he picked. The major surprise was the exclusion of Denilson, in favour of Giovanni who was only included in the squad because it was thought to risky to gamble on Juninho, just three months after he broke his leg.

Zagallo admitted that in Juninho's absence, he had gone for the Giovanni-Rivaldo midfield partnership because the two already play together at Barcelona. The other surprise inclusion in the squad was the presence of central defender Marcio Santos, a survivor from the 1994 World Cup, who has since withdrawn injured and been replaced by Milan's Andre Cruz.

With two exceptions, it was the squad most Brazilians wanted to see. Up front, many felt that the veteran of three World Cups, Muller, would have been a better a choice than Bebeto as a reserve, and in defence Vasco da Gama's Mauro Galvao should have got the nod over Marcio Santos.

Zagallo's task now is to make up for lost time. The Brazilian Federation and team sponsors, Nike, have spent the last two years putting commercial interests before technical ones in their organisation of a hotpotch of matches aimed at filling their coffers rather than allowing Zagallo a decent stab at building a team.

In accepting games anywhere and any time, irrespective of which players were available, Zagallo has almost never had a full selection of players at his disposal, having instead to bow to the interests of both foreign and Brazilian clubs when naming his squads. He has fielded more than 100 different players in his four years in charge and the team which will face Scotland has never been picked by him before.

Having set his mind on the team, however, it is now hoped that Zagallo will give the players more freedom than he has done in the past. Creative midfielders such as Rai, who had just one game to show Zagallo his talents, Denilson and Rivaldo have all struggled under the wily, veteran manager and seem inhibited by having to drop back to mark their opponents. A stark contrast to their clubs where they are encouraged to get into the penalty area as much as possible.

Brazil's best performances of late have come when they have been two goals behind – against Mexico in the Copa America (they came back to win 3-2) and Italy in Le Tournoi (they drew 3-3), when the players were allowed to throw caution to the wind.

If Zico, whose influence is already apparent since his appointment in March, can now convince Zagallo that he does not need to be quite so cautious, he will be doing both Brazil and the World Cup a huge service.

Brian Homewood

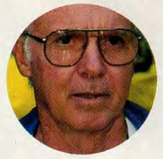
FRANCE 98 SCHEDULE

June 10,
v Scotland, Saint-Denis
June 16,
v Morocco, Nantes
June 23,
v Norway, Marseille

QUESTIONS TO THE COACH

'Playing well and not winning does not interest me'

Mario Zagallo



● ***What would be a good World Cup for you and what would be a disappointment?***
Our aim is to get beyond the first round, that would be a good start. After that, we will see how far we can get. Brazil doesn't have an obligation to win the Cup. Obviously, that is our ultimate aim but if we don't win, you can't call it a failure. If we do win that's good enough for me, but if we win and play nice football that would be even better. It's winning that counts. Playing well and not winning does not interest me. In 1982, Brazil played well and didn't win but I'd prefer to remember 1970, when we won the Cup and played beautiful football.

● ***Who are your favourites to win?***
I think it will be one of the usual crowd: Brazil, Germany, England, Italy, France or Argentina.

● ***Which players and teams will be the surprises of the finals?***
Possibly Norway, who we have to play in the first round and... Nigeria, they are another possibility. Colombia have always played very good football, they are technically very gifted but they have yet to stamp their presence on the World Cup. As for surprise players...I like Zinedine Zidane.

● ***Who will be Brazil's key players?***
For us, the whole is more important. We don't have any one key player. We have 22 players, all of whom are good enough to play for the Brazil national team. The important thing is that everyone knows their job on the pitch and that everyone plays, not just when we have the ball but also when we don't have possession.

● ***What technical or tactical changes should we expect in France?***
I don't think there will be anything new in this aspect.

● ***How do you rate your group opponents?***
Scotland are from the British school. We have watched dozens of tapes of them, we have played against Wales to prepare and we know what to expect. They play to their strengths, it's the traditional British style of play. Norway are a team we know all about as well, especially after last year when they beat us 4-2. Nobody at the World Cup will be in the dark about anyone else. Morocco gave us a very difficult game last year.

● ***What do you think about the decision to ban tackles from behind?***
There is nothing new about this, we have known about it for a long time. Brazilian players do not commit this sort of offence, so we will not have to adjust. It will be to our benefit because it's the other countries who tackle from behind. There's nothing wrong with the timing. Any time is a good time to outlaw this kind of challenge.

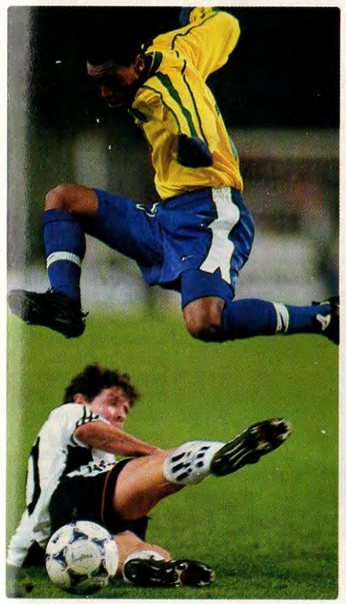
● ***How do you fee about the huge amounts of money players earn today?***
Times have changed since I played in 1958. There's nothing wrong with players making the most of what is offered to them. It's their fortune that they are playing today when salaries are much higher.

Interview: Brian Homewood

HOW THEY LINE UP

Zagallo's 4-2-2-2 formation has been criticised for its inflexibility, but it is packed with individual talent. Taffarel is back as the first-choice keeper, with Aldair and Junior Baiano the regular centre-backs. Andre Cruz and Goncalves provide the central defensive cover. Roberto Carlos is the undisputed choice at left-back, with Cafu on the right and Ze Roberto in reserve. Dunga and Cesar Sampaio do the legwork in midfield, with Giovanni and Rivaldo further forward. Left-winger Denilson will start on the bench but could come in for either of the attacking midfielders at any stage. Romario tends to drop deeper than Ronaldo, who may also drop back if tightly marked.

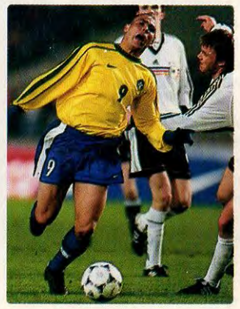
NAME	CLUB	AGE	CAPS	GLS
GOALKEEPERS				
Taffarel	Atletico Mineiro	32	92	0
Carlos Germano	Vasco da Gama	27	8	0
Didi	Cruzeiro	24	0	0
DEFENDERS				
Cafu	Roma (Ita)	28	62	1
Roberto Carlos	Real Madrid (Spa)	24	45	2
Ze Roberto	Flamengo	23	15	1
Aldair	Roma (Ita)	32	62	3
Junior Baiano	Flamengo	27	14	2
Goncalves	Botafogo	32	22	1
Andre Cruz	Milan (Ita)	29	19	1
Ze Carlos	Sao Paulo	29	0	0
MIDFIELDERS				
Rivaldo	Barcelona (Spa)	26	9	5
Leonardo	Milan (Ita)	28	39	6
Doriva	Porto (Por)	26	8	0
Dunga	Jubilo Iwata (Jap)	34	83	6
Denilson	Sao Paulo	20	14	5
Cesar Sampaio	Yokohama Flugels (Jap)	30	26	2
Giovanni	Barcelona (Spa)	26	13	4
FORWARDS				
Edmundo	Fiorentina (Ita)	27	27	9
Romario	Flamengo	32	62	43
Bebeto	Botafogo	34	66	38
Ronaldo	Internazionale (Ita)	21	35	26



Players to watch

< DENILSON
An old-fashioned winger, Denilson has not been included in the team to start against Scotland but should figure at some stage. If given his favoured free role, he could be one of the revelations of the competition.

RONALDO
Who else? A second World Cup outing for the world's top player, although as a 17-year-old in 1994 he didn't play. Already being talked about as the player of the tournament.



THE VIEW FROM BRAZIL

Tostao, a member of the legendary 1970 World-Cup winning team, now one of Brazil's finest football writers

"Without doubt, Brazil's strength is the individual quality of our players. In particular we have Ronaldo, our biggest hope, Roberto Carlos, the best left-back in the world, and Rivaldo. Maybe Romario, too, but we'll have to see how he goes.

"As far as weaknesses go, there are some players, such as Aldair, Dunga and as I've said Romario, who are on the way down and no longer as quick as they used to be. But our main weakness is the lack of tactical variation. The team only seems to have one way to play. As Argentina's coach Passarella said after their recent victory over Brazil, we are a predictable side, which makes it easier for the opposition to block our attacks.

"Denilson will be the player to watch. Although he's just lost his place in the starting line-up for the first game, he's a young player of great talent who will have a part to play in the tournament and could well win back his place."

Finish against the Finns...Darren Jackson fires home Scotland's equaliser in the friendly against Finland

Brown looks beyond Brazil

The Scots won't be distracted by the opening showdown

THOSE older and infinitely wiser supporters of the Scottish national side will remember, with a painfully sharp degree of lucidity, the events which surrounded the very public send-off given to the squad back in 1978. Then, under the ebullient stewardship of Ally MacLeod, the players embarked on an ill-fated trip to the World Cup finals in Argentina.

In scenes chillingly reminiscent of the Nuremberg Rallies, MacLeod and his men were paraded in the roles of impending heroes around a packed Hampden Park before heading for Glasgow Airport and a trip halfway round the world, aiming to change the shape of Scottish international football for ever.

Twenty years on, the memories of that balmy Hampden evening were pushed aside as the battle-hardened campaigners of the Tartan Army filed into Hibernian's Easter Road for a friendly against Finland, and a final look at the Scotland squad before they headed for France 98, with two games in America sandwiched into the itinerary.

If the squad of 1978 had left on a tidal wave of optimism, then their present day counterparts headed off on a gentle ripple of apathy. By lunchtime on the day of the Finland game, only around 10,000 tickets had been sold. Fortunately, a late rush of interest resulted in Easter Road being almost filled to its 16,000 capacity, but there was little on show to raise anyone's hopes as the Finns, who have never qualified for the World Cup finals, ripped the Scottish defence apart to take the lead through Jonathon Johansson, a striker who, ironically, makes his living in Scotland, with Rangers.

Darren Jackson salvaged an equaliser with a scrambled effort, but the draw merely enhanced the growing nervousness among the fans who, a few weeks earlier, had watched the team succumb to impressive Denmark at Ibrox. Again, the damage had been done by a Rangers player, Brian Laudrup, who scored the only goal.

Friendlies against the USA and Colombia provide the only match practice available to coach Craig Brown before he sends his team out to face the might of Brazil in the opening game of France 98. Fortunately, injury problems to the squad have been remarkably few, the exception being of course former skipper Gary McAllister. Blackburn defender Colin Hendry looks set for the captain's role, while Craig Burley should take over in the centre of midfield, after his exemplary first season with Celtic.

The showpiece fixture against Brazil will be one to savour, but the real work will take place during the following matches against Norway and Morocco. Scotland should be capable of defeating both and progressing to the second stage, but Brazil appear to have written off the threat, manager Mario Zagallo having taken the unprecedented step of announcing his team five weeks in advance.

Brown can now plan his tactics for the game on June 10, confident in the knowledge that Ronaldo and Romario will lead the Brazilian attack in Paris.

No doubt he will be able to take full advantage of such valuable inside information!

Alan Fairley

HOW THEY QUALIFIED

EUROPEAN SECTION, GROUP 4

31.08.96 .....Austria-Scotland 0-0
05.10.96 .....Latvia-Scotland 0-2
09.10.96 .....Estonia-Scotland ...Abandoned
10.11.96 .....Scotland-Sweden 1-0
11.02.97 .....Estonia-Scotland.....0-0
29.03.97 .....Scotland-Estonia 2-0
02.04.97 .....Scotland-Austria 2-0
30.04.97 .....Sweden-Scotland 2-1
08.06.97 .....Belarus-Scotland 0-1
07.09.97 .....Scotland-Belarus 4-1
11.10.97 .....Scotland-Latvia 2-0

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Austria	10	8	1	1	17	4	25
***Scotland**	**10**	**7**	**2**	**1**	**15**	**3**	**23**
Sweden	10	7	0	3	16	9	21
Latvia	10	3	1	6	10	14	10
Estonia	10	1	1	8	4	16	4
Belarus	10	1	1	8	5	1	4

*Scotland qualified as best runners-up

FRANCE 98 SCHEDULE

June 10, v Brazil, St Denis
June 16, v Norway, Bordeaux
June 23, v Morocco, St Etienne

QUESTIONS TO THE COACH

'We're a happy team with happy supporters'

Craig Brown

● ***What would be a good result for you in France?***
Everybody must say to win the World Cup! If you go, you go to do the best you can. But realistically a good result for us would be to reach the second round.

● ***How do you rate your group opponents?***
Very good. They're rated one, 10 and 11 in the FIFA rankings. Now I don't know how reliable the rankings are, but all three are very highly rated.

● ***Who are your key players?***
We are a unit, we have a good spine in the team – excellent goalkeeping cover, a very good central defence with Colin Hendry, John Collins in midfield and Kevin Gallacher up front who has scored 20 goals in England this season.

● ***Is Gary McAllister's injury a big loss?***
Yes, major. He's very influential, but he'll be with us off the field.

● ***Is it difficult to prepare players for such big games?***
We have big games every week in Scotland. In England, there's only Manchester United that gets bigger crowds than Rangers or Celtic. In terms of big atmosphere, big environment, the players are used to that.

● ***Is it annoying that the English media ignore you?***
Well, there's less focus on the English up here in Scotland! But we like to get on with things quietly and in our own way.

● ***Who are your favourites to win the World Cup?***
Obviously Brazil. Then there's Germany and currently the best team in Europe is Spain, with Romania not far behind. The Romanians are very talented and if they want to play, they can! As for France, I think there will be too much pressure on them.

● ***Which players will stand out?***
Alan Shearer – as he did in Euro 96. I also think Collins can be a star, I really do. Hagi is very capable, Hierro of Spain is very, very good. Every team has outstanding players. Brazil have apparently dropped Denilson, but I take that with a pinch of salt!

● ***Are we going to see any tactical changes?***
No. The change in the offside law will have a major effect, though. The last World Cup had teams pressing up against each other, playing 4-4-2, closing the game up. Brazil had a flat, organised back four and the Italians had Baresi masterminding. Now, with the new law, if you're in line you're onside, so good strikers are going to play off the last defender and more depth will be required.

● ***Can the tackle from behind rule be enforced?***
I hope so. I was in Mexico in 1986 when a horrendous tackle from behind put Charlie Nicholas out and Alex Ferguson was deprived of his greatest talent.

● ***Is 32 teams too many?***
No, we might not have qualified otherwise! I think 172 teams started and there are 140 countries out there who are not going, so we did well to qualify.

● ***You're set to become Scotland's longest-serving boss. Do you feel pressure?***
Not at all. Because you've signed a four-year contract, you know they'll keep you.But I do feel responsibility to a very proud nation. Their attitude is that the team should not let anyone down.

● ***Is there a secret to being a successful manager?***
No, but I read a lot, I listen, I have good back-room staff. International management is based on trust, we want the players to be happy. It's not that we don't care about winning, the point is it's a festival of fun. We're going to enjoy it – we can't realistically expect to win it. We've translated a wee phrase from Eduardo Galardo's book *Football In Sun And Shadow* which is our motto for the finals: *Victoire ou défaite*, victory or defeat, *qui'importe sur la fête*, the important thing is the festival of fun.

● ***Will it catch on with the Tartan Army?***
I'm not sure, but the important thing is that we have a positive experience. We're a happy team and we've got happy supporters.

Interview: Gavin Hamilton

HOW THEY LINE UP

Scotland line up in a 5-3-2/3-5-2 formation, with the wing-backs Jackie McNamara and Tom Boyd pushing forward whenever possible. Jim Leighton is the likely starter in goal against Brazil in the absence of a fully fit Andy Goram. John Collins and Craig Burley are both capable of scoring goals from midfield, while up front the pacy Kevin Gallacher is most likely to be partnered by Gordon Durie, the most physically imposing of Craig Brown's striking options. Stuart McCall, Simon Donnelly, Ally McCoist and Darren Jackson should all be called upon at some time from the bench.

NAME	CLUB	AGE	CAPS	GLS
GOALKEEPERS				
Jim Leighton	Aberdeen	39	85	0
Andy Goram	Rangers	34	43	0
Neil Sullivan	Wimbledon (Eng)	28	2	0
DEFENDERS				
Tom Boyd	Celtic	32	53	2
Colin Calderwood	Tottenham (Eng)	33	26	1
Christian Dailly	Derby County (Eng)	24	7	1
Matt Elliott	Leicester City (Eng)	29	3	0
Colin Hendry	Blackburn Rovers (Eng)	32	29	1
Tosh McKinlay	Celtic	33	19	0
David Weir	Hearts	27	5	0
Jackie McNamara	Celtic	24	4	0
MIDFIELDERS				
Craig Burley	Celtic	26	23	0
John Collins	Monaco (Fra)	30	46	9
Scot Gemmill	Notts Forest (Eng)	27	13	0
David Hopkin	Leeds United (Eng)	27	4	2
Paul Lambert	Celtic	27	10	0
Stuart McCall	Rangers	33	40	1
Billy McKinlay	Blackburn Rovers (Eng)	29	24	4
FORWARDS				
Simon Donnelly	Celtic	23	6	0
Gordon Durie	Rangers	32	39	7
Kevin Gallacher	Blackburn Rovers (Eng)	31	35	8
Darren Jackson	Celtic	31	22	3
Ally McCoist	Rangers	35	59	19
Neil McCann	Hearts	23	0	0
Scott Booth	Bor Dortmund (Ger)	26	15	5

Players to watch

KEVIN GALLACHER > Star man whose pace and finishing up front are vital to Scotland's cause. A prolific scorer for Blackburn in this season's Premiership campaign.

JACKIE MCNAMARA >> Young right-back who loves to attack. Has had an excellent season for Celtic.

THE VIEW FROM SCOTLAND

PETER LORIMER, the goal-scoring midfielder of the 1974 World Cup side

"Scotland's principal strength is undoubtedly Kevin Gallacher's pace. That will pose problems for any defence.

"My main concern is the absence of a suitable striking partner for him. I'm a great admirer of Ally McCoist but time may be running out on him now, while both Simon Donnelly and Darren Jackson might be a bit lightweight for the task. I suppose the height and strength of Duncan Ferguson would have made him the ideal partner for Gallacher, but it doesn't look as if he will be in the squad.

"We're probably playing Brazil at the right time. It will be a tense affair but anything other than a victory for them will be a major surprise. Norway will be difficult opposition too, but I think Scotland can force a draw. That should leave us needing victory over Morocco in the final game, and I'm sure that's a result which can be achieved."

African dream...Morocco will be keen to make their mark in France

HOW THEY QUALIFIED

AFRICAN SECTION, GROUP 5

09.11.96.....Morocco-Sierra Leone.....4-0
12.01.97.....Ghana-Morocco.....2-2
06.04.97.....Gabon-Morocco.....0-4
26.04.97.....Sierra Leone-Morocco.....0-1
08.06.97.....Morocco-Ghana.....1-0
17.08.97.....Morocco-Gabon.....2-0

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
***Morocco**	**6**	**5**	**1**	**0**	**14**	**2**	**16**
Sierra Leone	5	2	1	2	4	6	7
Ghana	6	1	3	2	7	7	6
Gabon	5	0	1	4	1	11	1

*Morocco qualify for finals

One point would be wonderful

It's as tough a test as Morocco have ever faced

MOROCCO will be among the last countries to decide on a 22-man squad for the World Cup Finals. The coach, Henri Michel, is waiting until the conclusion of the Hassan II Cup with Belgium, England and France before announcing his intentions.

But consistency has long been the key word of the French-born Michel, who returns home this summer in his role as a hero of Moroccan football.

Michel is the man who did most to turn around football in the North African country after the team lost all three of their matches at the last World Cup in the USA. And, while the team might have looked a little stretched this year, they still have a remarkable record of just five defeats in five times as many matches since Michel arrived.

Morocco's African Nations Cup campaign proved disappointing. They were pre-tournament favourites but were knocked out in the quarter-finals. There was some consolation in having gone out to South Africa, who went on to lose on the Final, and it was not a defeat greeted with too much despair back in the casbahs of Marrakesh, Fez and Casablanca, with Moroccans rightly believing that the World Cup is a much bigger prize.

Morocco have played only one game since that result in Ouagadougou, travelling to Bulgaria for a friendly international which they lost 2-1.

Michel has attempted one or two experiments, with the return to the team of Rachid Neqrouz of Italian Serie A outfit Bari, who was a surprise absentee from Burkina Faso, and Mounir Bounouar of German team Stuttgart Kickers.

Bounouar lasted just one half against Bulgaria, and Michel used the second 45 minutes to try Reda Riahi, a diminutive striker with Raja Casablanca, who won a lone cap ages ago but has now forced his way back to prominence with his form in the African Champions League.

Michel, however, might have been using the match to try a few more of the locally based players in response to criticism within Morocco that he gives few opportunities to players still based there. It is a particular problem for coaches in African countries, where fans do not see the expatriate players any more and then cannot understand why the form of a local star has not earned him a call into the national team.

Michel has a more pressing concern, however. He is still searching for a goalkeeper, a department where Morocco have struggled since the retirement of Badou Zaki.

At the African Nations Cup they used veteran Abdelkader El Brazi, but he has been dropped since. Benzerki of Renaissance Settat has come in, and there has been talk of calling on Zaza, a Moroccan-born goalkeeper from Denmark.

This is the last piece of the jigsaw the coach will need to work on before the opening match, against Norway on June 10.

This is Morocco's fourth appearance in the finals, with 1986 remembered as their best. Then they got to the second round, thanks in part to a goalless draw against England (who had Ray Wilkins sent off), and went on to give Germany several scares before losing by the only goal, late on, from Lothar Matthaus.

In 1970 they went out in the first round, gaining only one point, and in 1994 they left at the same stage after three defeats, although all were by a single goal.

This time Norway, Brazil and Scotland are the obstacles they need to overcome. It's as tough a test as any, and if Michel's men were to take as much as one point it would be a triumph.

Mark Gleeson

FRANCE 98 SCHEDULE

June 10,
v Norway, Montpellier
June 16,
v Brazil, Nantes
June 23,
v Scotland, Saint Etienne

QUESTIONS TO THE COACH

'Denilson is the man to watch – he has tremendous potential'

Henri Michel

● ***What target have you set your team for the finals?***
Like all the other coaches, I want to reach round two, at least. It's good to be in the finals, but that alone is not sufficient.

● ***Who are your favourites to win the event?***
It's difficult to pick any one country. I suppose Brazil, France, Italy or Germany will win it. But someone will cause a surprise.

● ***Which players and teams will be the stars of the finals?***
Norway could be the surprise team. The way they play, and their application, is suited to the World Cup format. If I had to pick a single player to watch, I would pick Denilson of Brazil. He has tremendous potential.

● ***Who are the key players in your squad?***
I go for Naybet, my best-known player. Few of the others have played at the highest level, although most are professionals.

● ***What technical/tactical developments should we expect to see?***
This could be very interesting. So many teams play in so many different ways. It will be fascinating to see what systems are used.

● ***How will the tournament's new size and structure affect your preparations?***
I'm not greatly concerned about everyone having to play at three different venues in the first round. Making everyone move everywhere leaves us all level. You could even say we're all on the same plane!

● ***How do you rate your group opponents?***
Obviously the game against Brazil will be very hard, but we'll hope for the best. Norway posed problems for everybody during the qualifying rounds, and Scotland may not be brilliant but they have terrific spirit. We play them last, so our strategy against them will depend entirely on what's happened before.

● ***You did not do very well in the African Nations Cup. How will this affect your performance in France?***
I don't think we played as badly in the Nations Cup as people make out. It's always difficult playing in one tournament when another, like the World Cup, is just round the corner.

● ***What are the prospects of a future World Cup being held in Africa?***
I'd love to see that happen, but probably only three countries on the continent could stage such an event – ourselves, South Africa and Egypt.

● ***Morocco and France are connected in many ways. Will playing the World Cup in France be beneficial to you?***
Definitely. The fact that we are playing there is bound to help us - we'll have a lot of support. And I hope the weather is very hot and dry, to allow us to dictate some of the pace.

Interview: Andrew Warshaw

HOW THEY LINE UP

If you see a touch of Spanish flair about Morocco, do not be surprised – Naybet, Hadji and Bassir, three of their outstanding players of recent times, all left home to join Deportivo. The Moroccans break quickly from the back and, unlike some African teams, do not mind dropping back to defend. But they are still too fond of showing individual skill at the expense of teamwork, and are often caught out at set-pieces. Morocco have the option of a five-man defence now that Neqrouz is back. Azzouzi is a defensive midfielder, while Hadji is the flair in the midfield.

NAME	CLUB	AGE	CAPS	GLS
GOALKEEPERS				
Abdelkader El Brazi	Royal Armed Forces	33	36	0
Driss Asmar	El Jaddida	22	1	0
Driss Benzerki	RS Settat	27	5	0
DEFENDERS				
Lahcen Abrami	Wydad Casablanca	28	40	1
Abdelkrim El Hadrioui	Benfica (Por)	25	57	2
Taher El Khalej	Benfica (Por)	29	54	1
Mustapha Khalif	Raja Casablanca	33	16	1
Noureddine Naybet	Deportivo (Spa)	28	91	2
Rachid Neqrouz	Bari (Ita)	26	12	0
Youssef Rossi	Rennes (Fra)	24	18	0
Abdelilah Saber	Sporting Lisbon (Por)	27	23	0
Smahi Triki	Lausanne (Swi)	30	5	0
MIDFIELDERS				
Rachid Azzouzi	Greuth Furth (Ger)	27	34	0
Mourad Bounoua	Stuttgart Kickers (Ger)	25	1	0
Said Chiba	Compostela (Spa)	27	21	3
Youssef Chippo	FC Porto (Por)	25	18	1
Mustapha Hadji	Deportivo (Spa)	26	42	4
Abdellatif Jrindou	Raja Casablanca	23	15	1
Karim Mgoghi	Strasbourg (Fra)	27	2	0
FORWARDS				
Ahmed Bahja	Al Ittihad	27	20	5
Salaheddine Bassir	Deportivo (Spa)	25	24	13
Ali El Khattabi	Heerenveen (Hol)	21	5	1
Youssef Fertout	Belenenses (Por)	27	36	6
Abdeljalil Hadda	Club Africain (Tun)	26	10	3
Abderrahim Ouakili	1860 Munich (Ger)	27	7	2

Players to watch

YOUSSEF CHIPPO>>
Has emerged in the past season as a remarkable find for both club and country. He has just helped FC Porto to win the Portuguese championship and has cemented his role in the Moroccan midfield.

ABDELILAH SABER>>
A pacy defender, very fond of making overlapping runs down the flank. A recent signing by Sporting Lisbon, and an added attacking option for the North Africans.

THE VIEW FROM MOROCCO

Aziz Bouderbala, who played in the 1986 World Cup finals

"Morocco are in a very difficult group, and we need to be confident if we are to do anything. They will be hoping to do much better than in the USA, where it was disappointing.

"The team have played together for a long time and the players know each other well. We missed Bassir at the Nations Cup but now he is back the attack should be much stronger.

"As for weaknesses, Morocco need to be alert at the back and need more fortitude in the midfield. They lose the ball too much and watch the opposition play. And fear, of course, is a factor, especially against Brazil."

Made it...Egil Olsen and team celebrate qualification to France

Teamwork the key for Olsen

An unbeaten run sends Norwegian confidence soaring

HOW THEY QUALIFIED

EUROPEAN SECTION, GROUP 3

02.06.96.....Norway-Azerbaijan 5-0
09.10.96.....Norway-Hungary.....3-0
10.11.96.....Switzerland-Norway.....0-1
30.04.97.....Norway-Finland 1-1
08.06.97.....Hungary-Norway.....1-1
20.08.97.....Finland-Norway 0-4
06.09.97.....Azerbaijan-Norway 0-1
10.09.97.....Norway-Switzerland.....5-0

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
***Norway**	**8**	**6**	**2**	**0**	**21**	**2**	**20**
Hungary	8	3	3	2	10	8	12
Finland	8	3	2	3	11	12	11
Switzerland	8	3	1	4	11	12	10
Azerbaijan	8	1	0	7	3	22	3

*Norway qualify as group winners

SINCE SECURING qualification to the World Cup finals by thrashing Switzerland 5-0 in September 1997, national manager Egil Olsen and his players have been focused on the finals. So far, his search for a 22-strong squad has seen 40-odd players give their best in five friendlies and, going on the results of these games, Norway have every reason to be positive.

Olsen used the first of the three matches to experiment, changing the team completely from one game to the next. While it made it impossible to establish a backbone, it allowed him the chance to try out different options.

To go to France to play tournament hosts, and favourites, in a friendly before June does invite a beating, but in February, in Marseille's Stade Velodrome the Norwegians managed a 3-3 draw, coming from behind on three occasions.

Eric Mykland's midfield wizardry matched that of his famous counterpart Zinedine Zidane and goals by Tore Andre Flo and Vegard Heggem emphasised how the promising youngsters of the last few years have matured into international-class players ready to take on responsibility.

A month later in Brussels, Norway met Belgium, this time Vidar Riseth and Ole Gunnar Solskjaer got the goals in a 2-2 draw, although Flo was strong in attack.

The change of personnel in the back-four however brought insecurity to the team and goalkeeper Thomas Gill, who was given a chance to prove himself, was far from convincing. The ability to create chances was the real bonus of this match and the 4-5-1 system employed proved that the team seems far more comfortable with that, than the experimental 4-4-2.

In April Norway went to play Denmark in Copenhagen. The Danes had not lost in Idrettsparken for some years and were eager to prove that their ball skills, pace and individual artistry are far superior to the Norwegian craft and resilience. Liverpool's Oyvind Leonhardsen got the show off to a good start, giving Norway a 1-0 lead, after which the Danes lost their way and played second fiddle. Flo made it 2-0 only to then be denied what seemed a clear penalty. After 90 minutes, the Danes were left wondering what had hit them, with Flo yet again the star of the show.

Victory over Denmark, was the perfect birthday present for Olsen, celebrating his 56th year. Central midfielder Staale Solbakken, now with Aalborg after an unhappy spell with Wimbledon, was excellent. Everton's goalkeeper Thomas Myhre made his debut as a substitute for the injured Frode Grodas, while Dan Eggen and Haavard Flo gave convincing performances in defence and midfield respectively.

But naked results don't always convey every aspect of a game and Olsen has a few improvements to make before Norway kick off their campaign against Morocco on June 10, not to mention settling on his strongest team.

The main injury doubt is central defender Ronny Johnsen, who underwent a cartilage operation in early May. Otherwise the squad ought to be in good health, and Olsen had two final friendlies at home to Mexico and Saudi Arabia to field his strongest side. The side many believe will this time take Norway beyond the group stage.

Sigurd Odegaard

FRANCE 98 SCHEDULE

June 10
v Morocco, M'tpellier
June 16
v Scotland, Bordeaux
June 23
v Brazil, Marseille

QUESTIONS TO THE COACH

'We'll stick to what we know best'

Egil Olsen

● ***What will be a good result for you in France?***
If we advance from the first round we will be very happy as we have never done that before. If we win one or two matches after that it would be marvellous.

● ***How do you rate your group opponents?***
Even though I think Brazil are not as good as others might, I still think they will advance. Both Scotland and Morocco will be difficult, but we have a fair chance. Normally, on a very good day, we should be able to beat both of them, but I repeat: on a very good day.

● ***You beat Brazil 4-2 last year. Will that make it easier or more difficult in France?***
We discovered the weaknesses of Brazil and tried to exploit them and now that we know them, we can do it again. Of course it will be more difficult as Brazil underestimated us in Oslo. In addition, the pitch wasn't very good, and that helped us.

● ***Who are you key men?***
We prefer to talk about the collective organisation of the team, but we do have some extraordinary players: Tore Andre Flo, he's our artist, along with Eric Mykland, who plays for Panathinaikos.

● ***So many of your team play in England. Has that helped your preparations?***
It's a problem – too many of them are in England. You can't get to know them and there's a lack of control. I'd have liked nine or ten playing in Norway, competing in the Champions League [with Rosenborg]. That would have been easier.

● ***Who are your favourites to win the World Cup?***
Not very exciting. I think the same as everybody else: Brazil, France, Argentina, maybe Spain. Of course, there's England, Holland, Germany and Italy, maybe, but I don't think so.

● ***And surprises...***
There could be because the level at the top is very even. On a lucky day, everybody could be the best. Ten, 12 teams could win on a lucky day.

● ***Who will be the stars?***
From what I have seen, Zinedine Zidane has the most extraordinary skills. He was very strong against us in Marseille, he's a complete player, tactically, technically and physically.

● ***Has the new ruling on the tackle from behind affected your preparations?***
No, we will have to see what it means first. I'm worried about it. It will be difficult for the referees, but I hope they are consistent about it.

● ***Will we see many tactical changes at France 98?***
No. In my opinion, the penetrative, direct style is the most effective. We'll stick with that even though many countries, including England, are going in the opposite direction. Our changes will be in the intensity of the games, especially in defence.

● ***You've been criticised for Norway's direct style...***
Maybe direct is not the right word. I call it penetrating. If you play a ball beyond two, three, four opponents and then create a sort of unbalance, people tend to play the ball backwards again. They do it in England, everywhere. I don't think it's smart to play the ball back when you have unbalanced your opponent – you give them a chance to restore the balance. It's an easy philosophy: when you have created an unbalance, don't let them restore it.

● ***You finish as national coach after the finals...***
Yes, and I have a job at the Football Association and the University for Sport and Physical Recreation – unless I receive an attractive offer from elsewhere. Although it would be difficult for me to leave Norway.

● ***Would an offer from England tempt you?***
Oh yes, from a top team. People say that what we do in Norway works in Norway but would not work elsewhere. I don't believe it. It would be a challenge to try out my ideas in a team with very skilful players.

Interview: Gavin Hamilton

HOW THEY LINE UP

Under the eight-year reign of Egil Olsen, Norway have employed the same tactics. His doctrine has been that nearly all passes should be played forward and playing the ball behind or across the field is banned. While it has been referred to, perhaps unfairly, as 'long-ball', the key to his strategy is the quick counter-attack with balls aimed at the wide midfielders, such as Haavard and Jostein Flo and Frank Strandli who usually play as strikers for their clubs. Defensively Norway favour a zonal back four, while Tore Andre Flo is likely to be the lone striker. Ole Solskjaer and midfielders Riseth and Strandli are likely to start on the bench.

NAME	CLUB	AGE	CAPS	GLS
GOALKEEPERS				
Frode Grodas	Tottenham (Eng)	34	37	0
Thomas Myhre	Everton (Eng)	25	1	0
Thomas Gill	MSV Duisburg (Ger)	33	5	0
DEFENDERS				
Henning Berg	Manchester Utd (Eng)	29	50	4
Ronny Johnsen	Manchester Utd (Eng)	29	31	1
Dan Eggen	Celta Vigo (Spa)	28	12	1
Stig Bjornebye	Liverpool (Eng)	29	60	1
Alf-Inge Haaland	Leeds (Eng)	26	27	0
Gunnar Halle	Leeds (Eng)	33	59	5
Vegard Heggem	Rosenborg	23	1	1
MIDFIELDERS				
Kjetil Rekdal	Hertha Berlin (Ger)	30	64	13
Staale Solbakken	Aalborg (Den)	30	33	6
Oyvind Leonhardsen	Liverpool (Eng)	28	55	13
Petter Rudi	Sheffield Wed (Eng)	25	16	3
Haavard Flo	Werder Bremen (Ger)	28	7	1
Erik Mykland	Panathinaikos (Gre)	27	52	2
Vidar Riseth	LASK Linz (Aut)	26	4	1
Frank Strandli	Panathinaikos (Gre)	26	21	3
Daniel Berg Hestad	Molde	22	1	0
FORWARDS				
Tore Andre Flo	Chelsea (Eng)	25	23	11
Ole Gunnar Solskjaer	Manchester Utd (Eng)	25	11	6
Egil Ostenstad	Southampton (Eng)	26	12	5

Players to watch

TORE ANDRE FLO >
Norway's star man has found it hard to hold down a regular place in Chelsea's club side, but will almost certainly lead the national attack in France. A big responsibility for his young shoulders, but he is mature enough to cope.

VIDAR RISETH >>
Despite a disappointing stay in England some years ago, he has developed into a player whose sharpness and impudence make him a joy to watch. He hopes to use the World Cup to secure a return to England.

THE VIEW FROM NORWAY

RUNE BRATSETH, Norway's 1994 World Cup captain

"I'm quite optimistic on the prospects of Norway's chances in France. The strengths of our team are good organisation and our discipline combined with the players' will to work hard for each other as a unit.

"Our main weaknesses lie in the team's lack of tournament experience, although we did learn vital things from the 1994 World Cup campaign. Another problem is the fact that some of the squad players don't play regular first-team football.

"In my opinion there are two players to watch: Tore Andre Flo and Ronny Johnsen. Both are well known to the English public as they play for English clubs – Chelsea and Manchester United. Flo is only 25 and a tremendous prospect as a striker, while Johnsen's pace in central defence is a vital cog in the four-player back line, providing he is fully recovered from his injury of course."

Winging it...Francesco Moriero could be the novelty treat Maldini is hoping for in the Italian midfield

HOW THEY QUALIFIED

EUROPE GROUP 2

05.10.96.....Moldova-Italy.....1-3
09.10.96.....Italy-Georgia.....1-0
12.02.97.....England-Italy.....0-1
29.03.97.....Italy-Moldova.....3-0
02.04.97.....Poland-Italy.....0-0
30.04.97.....Italy-Poland.....3-0
10.09.97.....Georgia-Italy.....0-0
11.10.97.....Italy-England.....0-0

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
England	8	6	1	1	15	2	19
***Italy**	**8**	**5**	**3**	**0**	**11**	**1**	**18**
Poland	8	3	1	4	10	12	10
Georgia	8	3	1	4	7	9	10
Moldova	8	0	0	8	2	21	0

*Italy enter play-offs

PLAY-OFFS
29.10.97 Russia-Italy 1-1
15.11.97 Italy-Russia 1-0
Italy win 2-1 on aggregate

FRANCE 98 SCHEDULE

June 11,
v Chile, Bordeaux
June 17,
v Cameroon, Montpellier
June 23,
v Austria, Saint-Denis

Home improvement

Maldini's Serie A stars reach peak at the right time

THE CLOSER to the World Cup we get, the better seem Italy's chances. Not only have Italian clubs covered themselves in European glory this springtime with three of them (Juventus, Inter Milan and Lazio) reaching UEFA finals but, perhaps even more importantly, the most charismatic Italian player of the moment, Juventus striker Alessandro Del Piero, has recently been playing out of his skin.

Add those considerations to the obvious plus factors already working in Italy's favour, namely tradition and style, and it is hard to believe that the Azzurri will not be there or thereabouts when we get down to the World Cup wire.

Remember, three-times tournament winners Italy have reached the semi-final stage in three of the last four finals. Remember, too, that the cautious, defence-oriented and counter-attacking game favoured by coach Cesare Maldini is ideally suited to the rigours of a five-week tournament where the winners have to be capable of pacing themselves.

Ever since he took over the Italian side from Arrigo Sacchi in December 1996, Maldini has gone for a settled, tightly organised line-up that contrasts sharply with the English style, attacking 4-4-2 formation of rotating players favoured by his predecessor. Maldini's first choice side for France 98 has appeared to pick itself for some time now and if he makes any changes from the line-up used in qualifiers, they may concern Del Piero in attack and Roma's Di Biagio in midfield.

Maldini has said often that he expects to vary his side, according to the opposition and how the game is going. This is a smoke screen. In reality, he will stick to his favoured 5-3-2, in which Costacurta is sweeper behind Cannavaro and Nesta in central defence, with Di Livio and Paolo Maldini at full-back, with liberty to move forward and attack whenever possible.

A three-man midfield of Dino Baggio, Albertini and Di Matteo is the likely first choice to support Del Piero and Vieri up front. On the only occasion Maldini tried anything much different in the qualifiers, against England in Rome, it proved a disaster. The attempt that night to play with a three-man attack (Vieri, Zola and Inzaghi) left Italy's midfield embarrassingly short of cover while falling to prove the expected sparkle up front. Neither Inzaghi nor Zola have since donned the Italian jersey.

For a variety of reasons, including injury, Del Piero had only a marginal role in Italy's World Cup qualifiers. However, his splendid season and telling contribution to Juventus' Serie A title success make him the obvious first choice for the 'creative' striker role, leaving such as Zola and Roberto Baggio to watch either from the bench or, more probably, from their armchairs in front of a TV at home.

The other 'innovation' in the Italian team could be linked to the desperately poor season experienced by Milan. As they sank further down the Serie A table, so the form of midfielder Albertini begin to decline. If Maldini is not convinced that he is back to his best, then Di Biagio could yet get a look-in in the centre of midfield, flanked by Di Matteo and Dino Baggio.

A 3-0 win over Slovakia in Catania in January and a 3-1 victory against Paraguay in Parma in April, both of them friendlies, told us little new, other than that Di Biagio is ready to step in for Albertini, and as for injuries, Italy have (at press time) only one significant casualty – Juventus defender Ferrara, who broke a leg last February.

Here, however, the damage is relative since Ferrara's successor – Lazio's Nesta – is arguably the most talented Italian defender of the moment. All in all, don't write off Italy.

Paddy Agnew

QUESTIONS TO THE COACH...

'When everyone is fit, we're a very good side'

Cesare Maldini

● ***What went wrong against England last October?***
I probably made a few mistakes in the way we prepared for the game. We didn't play well at all but when everyone is fit, then we're a very, very good side. That's why when it came to the play-off game against Russia in Moscow, all we had to do was keep our cool because we didn't change our game in any way.

● ***Your side has been labelled as defensive. How would you describe your style of play?***
Whether it's 4-4-2 or 5-3-2, playing with four or five defenders – all that is just numbers. I try to play with good players, in their correct positions. Everyone says we're defensive but if you look at Germany, Spain, and even England, they all play with five defenders too.

● ***The expectations of the Italian public are huge. How do you cope with the pressure?***
Right now, I don't feel any pressure at all. I've been in soccer a long time and I know that when the time comes we'll have our problems from various pressures. As for the fans, in Italy we live and breath soccer and for those of us who work in the game, that's a wonderful thing.

● ***Who are your favourites for the tournament?***
It has to be Brazil, while France have a strong all-round side, even if they're still looking for a striker. Spain could do well, while England have improved a lot. I'm curious about Nigeria, who obviously have talent but can they forge themselves into a team?

● ***Which players or teams do you think will surprise?***
It's impossible to say. There are always surprises at a World Cup, but until the tournament begins, who knows?

● ***What do you make of your first round group opponents – Chile, Austria and Cameroon?***
Chile are a good side. I saw them beat England at Wembley and they were deserving winners. You have to be a good side to go to Wembley and win the way they did. They also have players with character and determination – Zamorano is the best example, and then they have Marcelo Salas, the Latin American player of the year. As for Cameroon, I haven't seen them myself but I have an ample dossier on them. They will be no pushover, and you can say the same for Austria too.

● ***Are you worried about FIFA's new ruling, the immediate sending-off for the foul from behind?***
I wouldn't have made this rule change, personally. Sure, the foul from behind, when it is done intentionally to hurt, is a sending-off offence, but there are defenders who can tackle fairly from behind and they won't be able to do that anymore.

● ***Can we expect any tactical or technical developments in France?***
From what I've seen of the qualifying games, I don't expect to see anything new in France.

● ***Who will be your key players in France?***
Your key players are always your most experienced players and then, in a competition like this, there is always a novelty factor, someone new. I hope that I have more than one such novelty.

● ***Your son, Paolo, is the team captain. What sort of working relationship do the two of you have?***
Everyone wants to know the answer to that question. Having him there is neither an advantage nor a disadvantage. I am often hard on him, I don't praise him as much as he deserves because I'm frightened that people will say, 'that's just daddy speaking about his son'.

Interview: Paddy Agnew

HOW THEY LINE UP

Cesare Maldini is of the old school – he prefers a five-man defence with Costacuta as sweeper, Cannavaro and Nesta as stoppers and Di Livio and son Paolo as the attacking wing-backs. Albertini sits in front of the defence, prompting proceedings, although he could lose out to Di Biago. Di Matteo and Dino Baggio are the all-singing, all-dancing cavaliers in central midfield. Del Piero and Vieri are Maldini's preferred 'little-and-large' combination in attack, but Vieri could easily be replaced by Casiraghi or Ravanelli. If things don't go according to plan, Maldini has the more attack-minded Moriero to bring on for Di Livio on the right, while Del Piero can drop behind two tall target-men strikers in a three-man attack.

NAME	CLUB	AGE	CAPS	GLS
GOALKEEPERS				
Gianluca Pagliuca	Inter	31	33	0
Angelo Peruzzi	Juventus	28	22	0
Gianluigi Buffon	Parma	20	2	0
DEFENDERS				
Fabio Cannavaro	Parma	24	13	0
Alessandro Costacurta	Milan	31	53	2
Luigi Sartor	Inter	23	1	0
Paolo Maldini	Milan	29	87	6
Alessandro Nesta	Lazio	22	11	0
Moreno Torricelli	Juventus	28	6	0
Gianluca Pessotto	Juventus	27	3	0
MIDFIELDERS				
Demetrio Albertini	Milan	26	50	2
Dino Baggio	Parma	26	46	7
Antonio Conte	Juventus	28	8	0
Angelo Di Livio	Juventus	31	20	0
Roberto Di Matteo	Chelsea (Eng)	27	31	2
Luigi Di Biagio	Roma	26	2	0
FORWARDS				
Pierluigi Casiraghi	Lazio	29	44	13
Enrico Chiesa	Parma	27	6	3
Alessandro Del Piero	Juventus	23	19	8
Fabrizio Ravanelli	Marseille (Fra)	29	21	9
Christian Vieri	Atletico Madrid (Spa	24	8	2
Francesco Moriero	Inter	29	2	2

Players to watch

ALESSANDRO DEL PIERO>
Italy's star man, golden boy and great attacking hope is on top form at the moment. Masterful.

LUIGI DI BIAGIO
Roma in-form midfielder who could force the out-of-sorts Albertini out of the side.

THE VIEW FROM ITALY

GIANCARLO GALLAVOTTI, Gazzetta dello Sport

"The weakness of the Italian World Cup effort this time is that, overall, we don't have as good a squad as Sacchi took to the United States in 1994. The crisis at Milan has done a lot more damage than just to the club because it's affected the morale and form of players such as Maldini, Costacurta and Albertini, key men in the national team.

"Italy suffer from a lack of outstanding midfielders, but we do have plenty of good attackers. It just depends how brave coach Maldini decides to be. Del Piero and Vieri are certain first choices but then there are several good players who won't find a place in the squad.

"Italian football is still No 1 in Europe at club level – Inter winning the UEFA Cup, Juventus the best team in the Champions League and even Chelsea's success in the Cup-Winners' Cup was down to Italians. But there isn't as much buoyancy about this World Cup campaign as there was in 1994."

Wembley winners...Chile celebrate their 2-0 victory over England in February

HOW THEY QUALIFIED

SOUTH AMERICAN SECTION

02.06.96.....Venezuela-Chile 1-1
07.07.96.....Chile-Ecuador 4-1
01.09.96.....Colombia-Chile 4-1
09.10.96.....Paraguay-Chile 2-1
12.11.96.....Chile-Uruguay 1-0
15.12.96.....Argentina-Chile 1-1
12.01.97.....Peru-Chile.....2-1
12.02.97.....Bolivia-Chile 1-1
30.04.97 ....Chile-Venezuela 6-0
08.06.97.....Ecuador-Chile 1-1
06.07.97.....Chile-Colombia 4-1
20.07.97.....Chile-Paraguay 2-1
20.08.97.....Uruguay-Chile 1-0
10.09.97.....Chile-Argentina 1-2
12.10.97.....Chile-Peru 4-0
16.11.97.....Chile-Bolivia 3-0

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Argentina	16	8	6	2	23	13	30
Paraguay	16	9	2	5	21	14	29
Colombia	16	8	4	4	23	15	28
***Chile**	**16**	**7**	**4**	**5**	**32**	**18**	**25**
Peru	16	7	4	5	19	20	25
Ecuador	16	6	3	7	22	21	21
Uruguay	16	6	3	7	18	21	21
Bolivia	16	4	5	7	18	21	17
Venezuela	16	0	3	13	8	41	3

*Chile qualify for finals

FRANCE 98 SCHEDULE

June 11,
v Italy, Bordeaux
June 17,
v Austria, Saint-Etienne
June 23,
v Cameroon, Nantes

The most exciting outsiders

Two top-class strikers could cause a few surprises

CHILE qualified for the World Cup on the last day of the South American qualifiers and in the last place, fourth out of nine nations in the continent's elimination tournament, but they could turn out to be one of the most exciting teams in France.

They have two of the world's most talented strikers, Marcelo Salas and Ivan Zamorano, who shared 25 of the 32 goals scored in their 16-match qualifying campaign. Together they can be virtually unstoppable.

They complement each other so well, although they have similar styles and have not played together all that often.

Zamorano's thigh injury has kept him inactive lately, but he hopes to be match fit for the final stages despite not having played in recent warm-up games. No other available striker is in his class.

Coach Nelson Acosta toyed with the idea of playing a third striker, Sebastian Rozental of Glasgow Rangers, but he has been out for months with injury and will not be fit in time to play any part in France.

Chile certainly look dangerous in attack but can be vulnerable in defence. The line-up at the back is not up to the standard of the strikers, despite the excellent Javier Margas, a veteran at 29. Pedro Reyes and Ronaldo Fuentes could be struggling, and – like the midfielders – are on the slow side.

Chilean League soccer is generally lacking in pace, and it will not be easy for the team, most of them home-based, to step on the gas.

The Chileans also lack a dynamic midfielder, which will not help the strikers. Marcelo Vega, Jose Luis Sierra and Clarence Acuna are the probable midfield trio, but their contribution is likely to depend on how much work they have to do. All are happier in attack than when having to chase back.

Assessing Chile's chances is difficult, although they look a good bet for a place in the second stage, at least. As they showed at Wembley in February, when they gave England a nasty shock, they certainly are capable of taking enough points from Cameroon and Austria to finish second in Group B, or even first if the Italians have a bad day or two. Sometimes, however, they do not travel well – and they have not won an away match in the finals for 48 years.

Not surprisingly, most of their qualifying points were gained at home, where they were beaten only by Argentina.

Acosta, however, is confident about his team's prospects. After the first game in the qualifying campaign, when Chile narrowly escaped defeat against everybody's easy target, Venezuela, he wrote "We will qualify for the World Cup" on a piece of paper, and signed it. Now he says: "We will qualify for the second round."

His team's form at Wembley was an exception – earlier, on a tiring tour, they had lost 3-1 in Hong Kong, drawn 1-1 in Iran and drawn 0-0 in New Zealand – but the World Cup usually has at least one surprise team, and Chile have as good a chance as any of achieving that status.

Eric Weil

QUESTIONS TO THE COACH

'This is Salas's big chance to become a world star'

Nelson Acosta

● ***What would you describe as being a good World Cup for you?***
I'll be happy if we get to the second stage. I have my 54th birthday during the tournament, so getting past round one would be a nice present.

● ***How do you rate your group opponents?***
I can't comment on Cameroon, because I haven't seen them. Italy play to a faster rhythm than we do and that could be a problem, but I recently watched Austria when they lost 3-2 to Hungary, and I think our forwards can do some damage to their defence. We have two fine strikers and I'm sure we can get a goal in each game – and sometimes one goal is enough.

● ***Who are your key players?***
Salas and Zamorano. They mean so much to us.

● ***Which team will win the tournament?***
A European team – it's hard to pick one when there are six with a chance. European teams are more dynamic than South American when playing on their own continent.

● ***Who will be the star players?***
Salas can be among them. He looks for the ball, knows where to put it, and is always on the go. It's a pity that he does not always play for us like he does for River Plate, but he knows this is his big chance to become a world star.

● ***Will there be any surprise results?***
Definitely. Perhaps they can involve us – as winners, not losers.

● ***Do you think there will be any tactical differences between this World Cup and those that have gone before it?***
I don't know about other countries. As for Chile, I am trying to get the players to change their mentality a bit. We have to step up the tempo, retain it throughout the 90 minutes, believe in ourselves and not lose concentration. If we don't do these things, we'll do what we always do – arrive, play three games, go home.

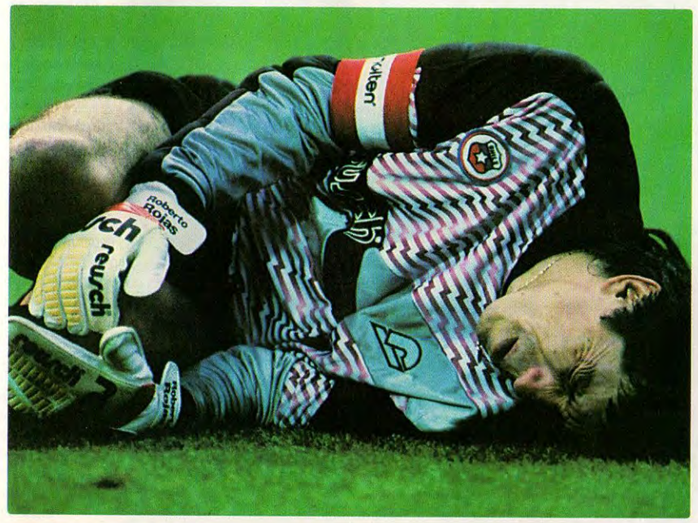
Interview: Eric Weil

THE VIEW FROM CHILE

Roberto Rojas, the former Chilean goalkeeper who was banned for life for faking injury in a World Cup qualifying game against Brazil in 1989 (below)

"FIFA trod on us when they banned us from the World Cup in 1990 and from taking part in the next one. A whole generation missed the chance to go to the tournament. But now we're back and I'm sure we'll make the most of it.

"Our opponents will face 11 fighters who also play good football. Teamwork should overcome any weaknesses in technique, and everybody will fear our strikers. We may even surprise the Italians."



HOW THEY LINE UP

Acosta's preferred formation is 4-3-1-2, with Nelson Tapia usually given the nod before Marcelo Ramirez in goal. In central defence, Ronaldo Fuentes is often used alongside Javier Margas instead of Pedro Reyes, while Cristian Castenada and Miguel Ponce fill the full-back slots. In midfield, attack-minded Victor Castenada and Clarence Acuna will probably be used together with Jose Luis Sierra, who may give way to Luis Musrri at some stage during the tournament. US-based Marcelo Vega plays in the hole behind the certain front two pairing of Zamorano and Salas.

NAME	CLUB	AGE	CAPS	GLS
GOALKEEPERS				
Nelson Tapia	Univ Catolica	31	27	0
Marcelo Ramirez	Colo Colo	33	11	0
DEFENDERS				
Francisco Rojas	Colo Colo	23	9	0
Pedro Reyes	Colo Colo	25	15	2
Javier Margas	Univ Catolica	29	46	4
Cristian Castenada	Univ de Chile	29	17	1
Ronaldo Fuentes	Univ de Chile	28	30	1
Ricardo Rojas	Univ de Chile	24	9	0
Miguel Ponce	Univ Catolica	26	8	0
Miguel Ramirez	Huachipato	27	34	1
MIDFIELDERS				
Marcelo Vega	MetroStars (USA)	26	23	1
Esteban Valencia	Univ de Chile	26	26	3
Clarence Acuna	Univ de Chile	23	18	1
Luis Musrri	Univ de Chile	28	22	0
Jose Luis Sierra	Colo Colo	29	25	2
Fernando Cornejo	Cobreloa	29	17	2
Nelson Parraguez	Univ Catolica	27	22	0
Victor Castenada	Univ de Chile	35	10	0
FORWARDS				
Ivan Zamorano	Internazionale (Ita)	31	37	23
Marcelo Salas	River Plate (Arg)	23	33	22
Claudio Nunez	Leon (Mex)	22	11	0
Juan Carreno	Concepcion	29	14	1
Rodrigo Barrera	Univ de Chile	28	12	1
Fernando Vergara	Colo Colo	28	5	0

Players to watch

MARCELO SALAS
Undoubtedly the star man for Chile, a very accurate striker who is nicknamed 'El Matador' (the killer). Will join Lazio after the World Cup.

CLARENCE ACUNA
The player to watch in what is a mediocre midfield. A hard worker, and one of a bunch of players from the Universidad de Chile club in Santiago.

Collective spiri...Cameroon's squad must pull together to achieve success

HOW THEY QUALIFIED

AFRICAN SECTION, GROUP 4

10.11.96.....Togo-Cameroon 2-4
12.01.97.....Cameroon-Angola.....0-0
06.04.97.....Cameroon-Zimbabwe.....1-0
27.04.97.....Cameroon-Togo.....2-0
08.06.97.....Angola-Cameroon.....1-1
17.08.97.....Zimbabwe-Cameroon.....1-2

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
***Cameroon**	**6**	**4**	**2**	**0**	**10**	**4**	**14**
Angola	6	2	4	0	7	4	10
Zimbabwe	6	1	1	4	6	7	4
Togo	6	1	1	4	6	14	4

*Cameroon qualify as group winners

Wanted: another 1990

The latest Lions do not look as fierce

CLAUDE LE ROY has wasted little time in shaking up the Cameroonian team since his appointment as coach for the World Cup finals.

He took over from Jean Manga Onguene, whose removal was widely expected after Cameroon were knocked out in the quarter-finals of the African Nations Cup in Burkina Faso.

Wily Frenchman Le Roy, who has extensive experience of coaching in Africa, is back for a second spell with the Indomitable Lions, and is obviously keen to shake up matters and get the side right before they begin their Group B campaign.

That much has been shown by the sweeping changes he made after returning from a training camp and a game in Sicily, in which Samuel Ipoua of Rapid Vienna scored a hat-trick in a 3-1 win over a regional selection.

Le Roy named only 12 of the squad from the Nations Cup in a list of 30 that includes nine newcomers, plus Francois Omam Biyik, still a lively striker at 32, whose opening goal at the 1990 World Cup in Italy put Cameroonian soccer on the map.

Goalkeeper Vincent Ongandzi, who had taken over from the temperamental Jacques Songo'o in Burkina Faso, is out. So are defenders Ernest Oben Etchi, Tobie Mimboe and Lucien Mettomo and winger Bernard Tchoutang.

Le Roy also left out St Etienne hard-man Romarin Billong, but that might be because he is battling with injury and may not be fit in time for the finals.

David Embe, who appeared for Cameroon in the USA four years ago and plays his club football in Mexico, is back almost a year after his last cap.

Jean-Jacques Etame, the France-born midfielder from Bastia, is back as well after winning his first cap at Wembley last November, and Chad-born Bertin Tockene from Charleroi in Belgium finally gets a call. For the rest, Le Roy seems to be gambling on another crop of youthful talent, just as Henri Michel did in the USA four years ago, with disastrous results.

Le Roy has no trouble in the attacking department now that Patrick Mboma has got over his hamstring strain. Midfield will be run by Marc-Vivien Foe, fresh from playing a major part in the sensational French League success achieved by Lens, and now a major target for English and Italian clubs.

In defence, Rigobert Song and Raymond Kalla remain and Songo'o is back in goal after his argument with Manga Onguene in February.

Cameroon have little time to get polished, their last warm-up being a meeting with Denmark in Copenhagen. But Le Roy is known to consider this too difficult an assignment so late in the build-up, and Cameroon might pull out of the match, despite the fact that the Danes have sold out most of the stadium.

In France, though, all being well, second place in Group B might not be beyond the team's capabilities.

Mark Gleeson

FRANCE 98 SCHEDULE

June 11,
v Austria, Toulouse
June 17,
v Italy, Montpellier
June 23,
v Chile, Nantes

QUESTIONS TO THE COACH...

'Referees will have to learn, just like the players'

Claude Le Roy

What is your target at this World Cup?
To make progress, to qualify at least for the second phase. Italy are the overwhelming favourites to top our group, but we have just as much chance as Austria and Chile of reaching the last 16. On a general level, my hope is that this Cameroon side are good ambassadors for their country. It's important we leave a positive image behind us, that we play good, attractive football.

Who will win the tournament?
As a Frenchman, my heart says France, but my head says Brazil. They have amazing strength in depth and lots of matchwinners.

Who are your most important players?
It's up to our players with experience and leadership qualities to set the example. I don't want to name individuals, but it's clear those players who have taken part in a World Cup before have a very important role to play. I'm looking for them to lead on the field.

Do you expect to see any surprise teams or players?
Nigeria would not be revelations, strictly speaking, if they went far, but they have the potential to perform really well in France. I also have a hunch the USA will be extremely competitive. There are many excellent young players around at the moment. Two who immediately spring to mind are Argentina's attacking midfielders Ortega and Gallardo.

How do you rate your group opponents?
Italy are a World Cup team par excellence, always present at the big tournaments. It seems they are finding good form at just the right time and, of course, Alessandro Del Piero can win a game on his own. Which Chile will we face? Which Chile will we see? The one which won well in England or the one which lost to Australia? I'm not sure. All the same, they are a good, compact team and have a great striker in Salas. Austria's confidence is low following some poor results, but they are not without their qualities. Polster is a very crafty goalscorer and Herzog's left foot is exceptional.

What tactical developments do you expect in France?
I don't expect much new. Probably just the familiar 3-5-2 and 4-4-2 patterns. But I'm confident it will be a World Cup with an abundance of lively, creative football and with the emphasis on players who take care not to give the ball away lightly.

What is your view on automatic red cards for tackles from behind?
I'm very much in favour of protectiing attackers against foul play. This directive should serve to free forwards psychologically. On the other hand, I'm worried that there could be confusion and arguments about the new ruling. I hope it is applied sensibly and consistently, and that there is not a glut of red cards. It's true defenders will have to learn fast, but the same applies to referees.

Interview: Nick Bidwell

HOW THEY LINE UP

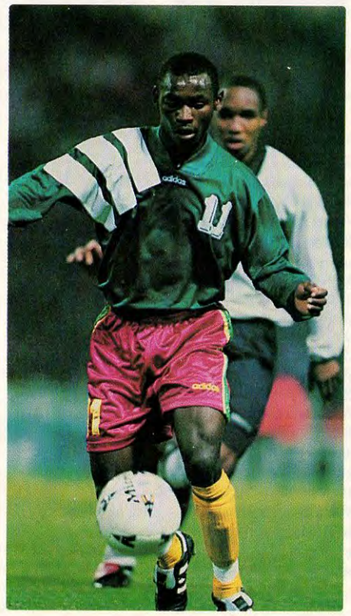
With the dropping of Bernard Tchoutang, Cameroon have lost their wide option and will probably look to the diminutive Simo to create their chances through the midfield. Mboma will be dangerous if he rediscovers the scoring form of the qualifiers.

NAME	CLUB	AGE	CAPS	GLS
GOALKEEPERS				
Jacques Songo'o	Deportivo (Spa)	34	48	0
William Andem	Boavista (Por)	29	25	0
Alioum Boukar	Vansport (Tur)	25	0	0
DEFENDERS				
Romarin Billong	Saint Etienne (Fra)	27	12	0
Rigobert Song	Metz (Fra)	21	26	1
Raymond Kalla	Panahaiki (Gre)	23	24	1
Pierre Nlend Wome	Lucchese (Ita)	19	25	1
Bertin Tockene	Charleroi (Bel)	24	0	0
Tobie Mimboe	Cerro Porteno (Par)	33	32	0
Ernest Etchi	Cotonsport	23	10	0
MIDFIELDERS				
Jean-Jacques Etame	Bastia (Fra)	31	1	0
Salomon Olembe	Nantes (Fra)	17	8	1
Samuel Ipoua	Rapid Vienna (Aut)	25	5	0
Marc-Vivien Foe	Lens (Fra)	22	39	0
Augustine Simo	St Etienne (Fra)	19	16	3
Cyrille Mangan	Xanthi (Gre)	21	8	1
Geremi Ndijitap	Genclerbirligi (Tur)	19	10	0
Guy Tapoko	Laval (Fra)	29	16	0
FORWARDS				
Patrick Mboma	Gamba Osaka (Jap)	27	13	6
Hecto Moukoko	Tecos (Mex)	20	12	1
Joseph-Desire Job	Lyon (Fra)	20	9	2
Didier Nguijol	Nice (Fra)	23	5	0
Alphonse Tchami	Hertha Berlin (Ger)	26	34	10
David Embe	Guadalajara (Mex)	24	15	2
François Omam Biyik	Sampdoria (Ita)	31	72	48

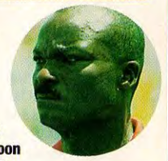
Players to watch

MARC-VIVIEN FOE>> Has emerged as one of the unlikely heroes of an unlikely season for new French champions Lens. A classy midfielder, and the key worker for Cameroon at the World Cup finals.

SALOMON OLEMBE>> He was the youngest international to play at Wembley, aged 16, when he went on against England in November 1997. He is full of confidence and has a ferocious shot. Another of the youthful production line that keeps Cameroon in international contention.



THE VIEW FROM CAMEROON



ROGER MILLA, ex-Cameroon striker

"I don't think they have any chance because everything has been so chaotic. Cameroon is a country with a lot of potential but I don't know if they have made the right choice with the new coach, or the new players. I just hope the players can do as well as we did in previous tournaments.

"The African style of play can be difficult to defend against, and the team will be motivated to do well for the whole country, but they have been very poor up front in recent games and need to work on finishing. They have dropped some players who could have been very useful in setting up attacks."

Defending the cause...Wolfgang Feiersinger may find himself a busy man in France

HOW THEY QUALIFIED

EUROPE SECTION, GROUP 4

31.08.96.....Austria-Scotland..... 0-0
09.10.96.....Sweden-Austria.....0-1
09.11.96.....Austria-Latvia.....2-1
02.04.97.....Scotland-Austria.....2-0
30.04.97.....Austria-Estonia.....2-0
08.06.97.....Latvia-Austria.....1-3
20.08.97.....Estonia-Austria.....0-3
06.09.97.....Austria-Sweden.....1-0
10.09.97.....Belarus-Austria.....0-1
11.10.97.....Austria-Belarus.....4-0

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
***Austria**	**10**	**8**	**1**	**1**	**17**	**4**	**25**
Scotland	10	7	2	1	15	3	23
Sweden	10	7	0	3	16	9	21
Latvia	10	3	1	6	10	14	10
Estonia	10	1	1	8	4	16	4
Belarus	10	1	1	8	5	21	4

*Austria qualify as group winners

Just glad to be back for now

Prohaska's men will need more than a little luck to make it through

AUSTRIANS are happy to be back at the races. After having appeared in three of the first six World Cups, this is only their fourth finals since, following 1978, 1982 and 1990.

Franz Krankle's goals in 1982 are hardly a living memory for younger fans, while the 1954 third place is something you have to be almost 60 to have experienced. All of which makes coach, Herbert 'Snail' Prohaska's task the more difficult.

Expectation of the national side is almost ridiculously high in some places, as reflected in supporters' demands for tickets. In Vienna, however, this is not the case and football in the capital is at an almost all-time low.

Yet again Vienna has nothing to show at the season's end. The League title was won by Sturm Graz, for the first time, with Grazer in second place. For Austria's pre-France friendlies against Hungary and the USA, the Prater Stadium was half empty, although local scepticism seems to have been justified. The results may have been unimportant, but two defeats were nevertheless disappointing, as was the performance of the team.

The USA had little difficulty prising apart Austria's rearguard and second-half substitute goalkeeper, Wohlfahrt, was given a workout between the posts which he had hardly expected, taking over from first-choice Konsel.

Goalkeepers have given Prohaska an unexpected headache. The press had demanded Arsenal's Manninger be taken as third keeper, but the coach had promised FK Austria veteran Wolfgang Knaller a last chance and he is sticking by his decision, despite considerable media pressure.

At the back Schottel, Feiersinger and Pfeffer select themselves, injuries permitting, but all three are over 30. Salzburg's Kogler could be an alternative, or cover, or indeed first choice if Prohaska were to go for 4-4-2 line-up rather than the more likely 3-5-2.

In midfield much will depend on the Werder Bremen axis of Herzog and Pfeifenberger, ever present in the side up to the post-qualification friendlies. Their absence due to club commitments gave Prohaska the chance to try out Cerny and Leeds United's new signing, Hiden. At 25, however, Hiden is a little raw by top standards and things went badly against the USA. The indications are that the old guard will return for France.

Up front, Polster has something to prove after relegation with Koln, but it is difficult to see Prohaska starting without him. There is no ready-made replacement, and no striker Prohaska can bring in has even half-a-dozen goals to his name at international level.

Prohaska may choose to play cagey in the opening match with Cameroon, aim to win against Chile and hope that is enough, or if not, scramble for a point in the last match against Italy. It is a tactic which will also rely on results elsewhere, but Austria could prove the most conservative member of Group B, so it may be their best chance. As both Prohaska and Polster have said, anything better will be more than they can really expect.

The friendlies have emphasised that despite Austria's qualifying record of just one defeat, they only scored 17 goals in 10 games, and only two against teams of any calibre – Scotland and Sweden. Lack of punch could therefore be Austria's downfall unless Herzog is on song and Polster (or Haas) considerably sharper. An alternative could be an out-and-out attacking role for Sturm's Vastic, but he will also be needed in midfield.

Sadly, it seems that third place is the best Austria can hope for – and Konsel may still need nine lives.

Bob Vaughan

FRANCE 98 SCHEDULE

June 11,
v Cameroon, Toulouse
June 17,
v Chile, Saint-Etienne
June 23,
v Italy, Saint-Denis

QUESTIONS TO THE COACH

'Remember we are outsiders, not a dream team'

Herbert Prohaska

● ***Realistically, how do you rate Austria's World Cup chances?***
I believe that we can match the achievements of the Czech Republic at Euro 96, or of Sweden and Bulgaria at the 1994 World Cup. Those teams were so strong because no one was expecting them to do well. Also, we have no pressure on us. We will attack and try to win all our matches.

● ***What would you consider to be a successful campaign?***
To get to the Final and have Brazil as our opponents, because then no one in Austria would blame us if we lost! But seriously, to reach the second round should be viewed as a success. Please remember we are outsiders. We deserved to qualify, but we are not a dream team.

● ***How do you assess the chances and strengths of your group opponents?***
Italy will obviously be favourites to win the group and go through, and of course they will be very difficult to beat, even though they had a little trouble qualifying. Chile or Cameroon won't be easy opponents, but then they aren't unbeatable either. I feel those two teams and ourselves all have a realistic chance of reaching the second stage.

● ***Who will be the key players for your side?***
Goalkeeper Konsel, central defender Feiersinger, midfielder Herzog and striker Polster. Herzog and Polster could be the force that myself and Krankl were in Argentina in 1978.

● ***Do you see similarities between that 1978 side and the current team?***
Yes, our team now is very similar. In 1978, we were a tightly-knit squad who believed in ourselves and had our sights firmly set on our goals. This side is working for the same cause and they resemble a club more than a national squad. We have character, style and a strong desire to succeed.

Interview: Bob Vaughan

HOW THEY LINE UP

Toni Polster is Austria's great hope for goals – but the alternatives to the veteran striker up front are limited. Feiersinger will play sweeper in a back three alongside stoppers Schottel and Pfeffer. The midfield will be packed with fetchers and carriers, leaving Vastic and the mercurial Herzog to create the chances for Polster. Kuhbauer is an alternative attacking midfield option, as is the newcomer Amerhauser. Konsel is the likely starter in goal, ahead of Wohlfahrt.

NAME	CLUB	AGE	CAPS	GLS
GOALKEEPERS				
Michael Konsel	AS Roma (Ita)	36	38	0
Franz Wohlfahrt	VfB Stuttgart (Ger)	33	35	0
Wolfgang Knaller	Austria Vienna	36	4	0
DEFENDERS				
Wolfgang Feiersinger	Bor. Dortmund (Ger)	33	36	0
Martin Hiden	Leeds Utd (Eng)	25	2	0
Walter Kogler	Cannes (Fra)	30	21	1
Anton Pfeffer	Austria Vienna	32	53	1
Peter Schottel	Rapid Vienna	31	51	0
MIDFIELDERS				
Michael Hatz	Rapid Vienna	27	2	0
Martin Amerhauser	SV Salzburg	23	2	1
Andreas Heraf	Rapid Vienna	30	9	1
Andreas Herzog	Werder Bremen (Ger)	29	66	13
Adolf Hutter	SV Salzburg	28	13	3
Dietmar Kuhbauer	Real Sociedad (Spa)	27	25	3
Roman Mahlich	Sturm Graz	26	8	0
Gilbert Prilasnig	Sturm Graz	25	5	0
Markus Schopp	Sturm Graz	24	16	1
Peter Stoeger	LASK Linz	32	57	13
Arnold Wetl	Rapid Vienna	28	12	3
Heimo Pfeifenberger	Werder Bremen (Ger)	31	34	9
Dieter Ramusch	Grazer AK	28	10	1
Ivica Vastic	Sturm Graz	28	10	2
FORWARDS				
Christian Mayrleb	Sheffield Wed (Eng)	26	0	0
Anton 'Toni' Polster	Koln (Ger)	34	89	41
Herfried Sabitzer	Grazer AK	28	6	1

Players to watch

WOLFGANG FEIERSINGER ∧
First-choice, experienced and dependable central defender who has filled in impressively for the injured Matthias Sammer at Borussia Dortmund this season.

TONI POLSTER ↗
Star man – the veteran Koln striker found the net seven times in the qualifiers. Austria's best hope for goals in France, and possibly their only hope in an inexperienced attack.

THE VIEW FROM AUSTRIA

Robert Franta, journalist and World Cup author

"The strength of the Austrian team is the defence, although the absurd third goal in the last minute against the USA left spectators aghast. The second defeat has cooled enthusiasm but coach Prohaska has a happy knack of bringing out the best in his players when it is most needed.

"Another strength is the goalkeeping department, and in attack, Toni Polster is a real force when on form, but whether he has recovered in time from the shock of relegation with Koln remains to be seen.

"The weakness is the lack of application, getting stuck in and fighting when the chips are down. Against Hungary, heads went down when things began to go badly after a 1-0 lead was surrendered. Against the USA we could not score as we should have in the first half, and when an impressive American team took the lead, things again fell apart.

"It was the usual Austrian fault of underestimating the opposition, made worse by our having qualified and players acting as if the job were done.

"The two Sturm Graz attackers, Mario Haas and Ivica Vastic, have had an excellent club season, but unfortunately have not been able to get goals for the national team."

Defending the cause...Wolfgang Feiersinger may find himself a busy man in France

HOW THEY QUALIFIED

EUROPE SECTION, GROUP 4

31.08.96.....Austria-Scotland..... 0-0
09.10.96.....Sweden-Austria.....0-1
09.11.96.....Austria-Latvia.....2-1
02.04.97.....Scotland-Austria.....2-0
30.04.97.....Austria-Estonia.....2-0
08.06.97.....Latvia-Austria.....1-3
20.08.97.....Estonia-Austria.....0-3
06.09.97.....Austria-Sweden.....1-0
10.09.97.....Belarus-Austria.....0-1
11.10.97.....Austria-Belarus.....4-0

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
***Austria**	**10**	**8**	**1**	**1**	**17**	**4**	**25**
Scotland	10	7	2	1	15	3	23
Sweden	10	7	0	3	16	9	21
Latvia	10	3	1	6	10	14	10
Estonia	10	1	1	8	4	16	4
Belarus	10	1	1	8	5	21	4

*Austria qualify as group winners

Just glad to be back for now

Prohaska's men will need more than a little luck to make it through

AUSTRIANS are happy to be back at the races. After having appeared in three of the first six World Cups, this is only their fourth finals since, following 1978, 1982 and 1990.

Franz Krankle's goals in 1982 are hardly a living memory for younger fans, while the 1954 third place is something you have to be almost 60 to have experienced. All of which makes coach, Herbert 'Snail' Prohaska's task the more difficult.

Expectation of the national side is almost ridiculously high in some places, as reflected in supporters' demands for tickets. In Vienna, however, this is not the case and football in the capital is at an almost all-time low.

Yet again Vienna has nothing to show at the season's end. The League title was won by Sturm Graz, for the first time, with Grazer in second place. For Austria's pre-France friendlies against Hungary and the USA, the Prater Stadium was half empty, although local scepticism seems to have been justified. The results may have been unimportant, but two defeats were nevertheless disappointing, as was the performance of the team.

The USA had little difficulty prising apart Austria's rearguard and second-half substitute goalkeeper, Wohlfahrt, was given a workout between the posts which he had hardly expected, taking over from first-choice Konsel.

Goalkeepers have given Prohaska an unexpected headache. The press had demanded Arsenal's Manninger be taken as third keeper, but the coach had promised FK Austria veteran Wolfgang Knaller a last chance and he is sticking by his decision, despite considerable media pressure.

At the back Schottel, Feiersinger and Pfeffer select themselves, injuries permitting, but all three are over 30. Salzburg's Kogler could be an alternative, or cover, or indeed first choice if Prohaska were to go for 4-4-2 line-up rather than the more likely 3-5-2.

In midfield much will depend on the Werder Bremen axis of Herzog and Pfeifenberger, ever present in the side up to the post-qualification friendlies. Their absence due to club commitments gave Prohaska the chance to try out Cerny and Leeds United's new signing, Hiden. At 25, however, Hiden is a little raw by top standards and things went badly against the USA. The indications are that the old guard will return for France.

Up front, Polster has something to prove after relegation with Koln, but it is difficult to see Prohaska starting without him. There is no ready-made replacement, and no striker Prohaska can bring in has even half-a-dozen goals to his name at international level.

Prohaska may choose to play cagey in the opening match with Cameroon, aim to win against Chile and hope that is enough, or if not, scramble for a point in the last match against Italy. It is a tactic which will also rely on results elsewhere, but Austria could prove the most conservative member of Group B, so it may be their best chance. As both Prohaska and Polster have said, anything better will be more than they can really expect.

The friendlies have emphasised that despite Austria's qualifying record of just one defeat, they only scored 17 goals in 10 games, and only two against teams of any calibre – Scotland and Sweden. Lack of punch could therefore be Austria's downfall unless Herzog is on song and Polster (or Haas) considerably sharper. An alternative could be an out-and-out attacking role for Sturm's Vastic, but he will also be needed in midfield.

Sadly, it seems that third place is the best Austria can hope for – and Konsel may still need nine lives.

Bob Vaughan

FRANCE 98 SCHEDULE

June 11,
v Cameroon, Toulouse
June 17,
v Chile, Saint-Etienne
June 23,
v Italy, Saint-Denis

QUESTIONS TO THE COACH

'Remember we are outsiders, not a dream team'

Herbert Prohaska

● ***Realistically, how do you rate Austria's World Cup chances?***
I believe that we can match the achievements of the Czech Republic at Euro 96, or of Sweden and Bulgaria at the 1994 World Cup. Those teams were so strong because no one was expecting them to do well. Also, we have no pressure on us. We will attack and try to win all our matches.

● ***What would you consider to be a successful campaign?***
To get to the Final and have Brazil as our opponents, because then no one in Austria would blame us if we lost! But seriously, to reach the second round should be viewed as a success. Please remember we are outsiders. We deserved to qualify, but we are not a dream team.

● ***How do you assess the chances and strengths of your group opponents?***
Italy will obviously be favourites to win the group and go through, and of course they will be very difficult to beat, even though they had a little trouble qualifying. Chile or Cameroon won't be easy opponents, but then they aren't unbeatable either. I feel those two teams and ourselves all have a realistic chance of reaching the second stage.

● ***Who will be the key players for your side?***
Goalkeeper Konsel, central defender Feiersinger, midfielder Herzog and striker Polster. Herzog and Polster could be the force that myself and Krankl were in Argentina in 1978.

● ***Do you see similarities between that 1978 side and the current team?***
Yes, our team now is very similar. In 1978, we were a tightly-knit squad who believed in ourselves and had our sights firmly set on our goals. This side is working for the same cause and they resemble a club more than a national squad. We have character, style and a strong desire to succeed.

Interview: Bob Vaughan

HOW THEY LINE UP

Toni Polster is Austria's great hope for goals – but the alternatives to the veteran striker up front are limited. Feiersinger will play sweeper in a back three alongside stoppers Schottel and Pfeffer. The midfield will be packed with fetchers and carriers, leaving Vastic and the mercurial Herzog to create the chances for Polster. Kuhbauer is an alternative attacking midfield option, as is the newcomer Amerhauser. Konsel is the likely starter in goal, ahead of Wohlfahrt.

NAME	CLUB	AGE	CAPS	GLS
GOALKEEPERS				
Michael Konsel	AS Roma (Ita)	36	38	0
Franz Wohlfahrt	VfB Stuttgart (Ger)	33	35	0
Wolfgang Knaller	Austria Vienna	36	4	0
DEFENDERS				
Wolfgang Feiersinger	Bor. Dortmund (Ger)	33	36	0
Martin Hiden	Leeds Utd (Eng)	25	2	0
Walter Kogler	Cannes (Fra)	30	21	1
Anton Pfeffer	Austria Vienna	32	53	1
Peter Schottel	Rapid Vienna	31	51	0
MIDFIELDERS				
Michael Hatz	Rapid Vienna	27	2	0
Martin Amerhauser	SV Salzburg	23	2	1
Andreas Heraf	Rapid Vienna	30	9	1
Andreas Herzog	Werder Bremen (Ger)	29	66	13
Adolf Hutter	SV Salzburg	28	13	3
Dietmar Kuhbauer	Real Sociedad (Spa)	27	25	3
Roman Mahlich	Sturm Graz	26	8	0
Gilbert Prilasnig	Sturm Graz	25	5	0
Markus Schopp	Sturm Graz	24	16	1
Peter Stoeger	LASK Linz	32	57	13
Arnold Wetl	Rapid Vienna	28	12	3
Heimo Pfeifenberger	Werder Bremen (Ger)	31	34	9
Dieter Ramusch	Grazer AK	28	10	1
Ivica Vastic	Sturm Graz	28	10	2
FORWARDS				
Christian Mayrleb	Sheffield Wed (Eng)	26	0	0
Anton 'Toni' Polster	Koln (Ger)	34	89	41
Herfried Sabitzer	Grazer AK	28	6	1

Players to watch

WOLFGANG FEIERSINGER ^
First-choice, experienced and dependable central defender who has filled in impressively for the injured Matthias Sammer at Borussia Dortmund this season.

TONI POLSTER ↗
Star man – the veteran Koln striker found the net seven times in the qualifiers. Austria's best hope for goals in France, and possibly their only hope in an inexperienced attack.

THE VIEW FROM AUSTRIA

Robert Franta, journalist and World Cup author

"The strength of the Austrian team is the defence, although the absurd third goal in the last minute against the USA left spectators aghast. The second defeat has cooled enthusiasm but coach Prohaska has a happy knack of bringing out the best in his players when it is most needed.

"Another strength is the goalkeeping department, and in attack, Toni Polster is a real force when on form, but whether he has recovered in time from the shock of relegation with Koln remains to be seen.

"The weakness is the lack of application, getting stuck in and fighting when the chips are down. Against Hungary, heads went down when things began to go badly after a 1-0 lead was surrendered. Against the USA we could not score as we should have in the first half, and when an impressive American team took the lead, things again fell apart.

"It was the usual Austrian fault of underestimating the opposition, made worse by our having qualified and players acting as if the job were done.

"The two Sturm Graz attackers, Mario Haas and Ivica Vastic, have had an excellent club season, but unfortunately have not been able to get goals for the national team."

Striking the right balance

Difficult yes, but going all the way is not beyond the host nation

SO, WHAT chance do the French really have of winning the World Cup? Will home advantage be a help or will the pressure prove too much? Are the players up to it?

Maybe. With luck, the hosts could go a long way. On the face of it, the initial qualifying group looks eminently negotiable, but if they do get through, life afterwards could be hard. And the main reason is that up to now, coach Aime Jacquet has been unable to find a world-class striker. Coming across one before the opening game on June 12 seems an impossible task.

Monaco's precocious David Trezeguet could come good in the tournament and solve the problem. Sooner or later he should prove to be the answer, but he is only 20, and the question is being posed a little on the early side for him.

Stephane Guivarc'h, who seems destined to join the extensive and expensive foreign colony at Middlesbrough, has had an excellent season with Auxerre, prompting the club to ask a fortune for him, but at international level one goal is not really enough.

In fact, his goal drought prompted Jacquet to try the somewhat desperate measure of pressing Nicolas Anelka and Christophe Dugarry into service against Sweden. To no avail. The game ended goalless.

Anelka came on strong in the run-in to Arsenal's Premiership success and he too may well be the answer, especially as his confidence will be up, but he also needs time. As for Dugarry, he is fairing better back home with Marseille after unsuccessful spells in Milan and Barcelona and he did well in last summer's Tournoi. His strength is in the air but, again, that's not really enough.

In midfield, however, France have an abundance of talent. A lot of their success will depend on whether or not the hugely talented but unpredictable Zinedine Zidane can do what he has been doing so well for Juventus this season, rather than struggle as he did during Euro 96, although he had been in an accident prior to the start of the tournament.

Christian Karembeu is another midfielder who has come steadily back to form since his transfer from Sampdoria to Real Madrid, and Didier Deschamps is also in good form. Defensively, the side is pretty sound and Laurent Blanc's experience will be vital.

Meanwhile, the big question is who will take over the team from Jacquet at the end of the tournament. It all looked done and dusted for Jean Tigana, the former elegant midfielder, with the French Federation so confident that he would accept the job that they hardly seemed to bother looking for anyone else. Before Tigana signed for another two years with Monaco, that is.

Alain Giresse, another great midfielder from France's past, seemed the next logical choice, particularly as he had been heard to say that one day he would like to manage the national team.

Jacquet himself, for whom Giresse starred as a player at Bordeaux, had even said that in time he would like Giresse to manage France – but not yet. First he wanted him to run a big club. Which is exactly what happened. Giresse, having held two administrative posts at Toulouse, progressed to team manager. He's just left however – to take over at Paris Saint Germain.

English Premiership boss Arsene Wenger, who has made it clear that managing France will never be an option for him (or else he would surely be a candidate) believes it will be very difficult to find the right man, particularly after the above two turned it down.

The likeliest candidate at the time of writing seems to be the former Nantes manager, Coco Suaudeau, although there are already whispers that the federation would be happy to prise Guy Roux away from Auxerre after a remarkable 30 years.

A poisoned chalice? It's beginning to look like it.

Andre Duclos

Lone striker...Youri Djorkaeff goes it alone for France

HOW THEY QUALIFIED

AUTOMATICALLY, AS HOSTS

FRANCE 98 SCHEDULE

June 12 v S Africa, Marseille
June 18 v Saudi Arabia, St-Denis
June 24 v Denmark, Lyon

QUESTIONS TO THE COACH

'A place in the last four is the minimum'

Aime Jacquet

● ***What is your target for France at this World Cup?***
A place in the last four is the minimum. As hosts, we must reach at least the semi-finals. We don't have any other choice.

● ***Who will win it?***
The main contenders are Brazil, Argentina, Germany and England. As for France, I'm optimistic we can do very well. The very essence of the life of my players and myself at the moment is to win the World Cup. It's our objective. Those players in the squad must not be satisfied just with participating. They will be out there to win it. If we have the good fortune to avoid major injury worries and if our fans get behind us, France will be extremely competitive.

● ***Who are your most important players?***
We have some truly great players who are capable of wonderful things on a football pitch. But of greater significance to me is the team as a whole. Thanks to our experience at Euro 96, we have matured as a unit. We have a well-defined style and have become more consistent.

Who will be the surprise teams and players?
Spain are strong and could be one of the surprises. It's hard to single out players who will explode into view at the World Cup, whose qualities are suddenly brought out by the intensity of it all.

● ***How do you rate your group opponents?***
It's acceptable for us. It could have been a lot worse. South Africa have lots of potential and are going to get stronger. Saudi Arabia are certainly capable of good football but are erratic. We should beat both. Denmark are our most dangerous opponents. They have quality players who nearly all play for good European sides and they are strong mentally. All in all, however, we should progress to the second round.

● ***Tactically what do you expect?***
Nothing really original, only a few minor alterations to the systems which have become standard in the last few years. In the first round I expect teams to be prudent, not to make mistakes. But once we get into the knock-out stage, teams will have to play to win.

● ***What is your view on automatic red cards for tackles from behind?***
I think it will be a great World Cup because the refereeing will be severe. If we want good football, attractive teams and technical excellence, we must protect the creative players. The situation at the moment is that the team who cheats wins. For the good of the game we have to eliminate this. I think this will be the last World Cup refereed like this. At the next one, I can see an additional referee on the pitch.

● ***Have you found the right combination in attack – the area generally seen as France's weak spot?***
We have lacked a little punch up front of late, but we have quality in attack. David Trezeguet and Stephane Guivarc'h are both very promising, they just lack experience. Youri Djorkaeff can be brilliant in front of goal and Christophe Dugarry is an excellent player. I don't think I'm short of choice.

● ***Many of your team play overseas, does that make your job harder?***
It's a plus. We've got players with Inter, Arsenal, Real Madrid, Juve, Sampdoria... Our players generally improve when they move abroad to these top clubs. They have to prove themselves again, to fight for a regular place. That can only be beneficial to the national team.

● ***Is playing at home an advantage?***
The French public can be critical, but I hope they will support us in the correct way. I can't imagine that they won't get behind us. It's a massive event and national pride is at stake.

Interview: Nick Bidwell

HOW THEY LINE UP

Jacquet has an abundance of options, especially in midfield, where Deschamps plays the holding role, and Zidane floats around further forward. Djorkaeff will play off the main striker, who will most likely be Guivarc'h but could be Trezeguet, Dugarry or Anelka. Karembeu is the most likely choice at right-half, while the final midfield berth could go to anyone from Boghossian, Petit, Candela or the more attack-minded Diomede and Pires. Laigle is preferred to Lizarazu at left-back, and Thuram will be played out of position at right-back. Barthez is first-choice keeper, ahead of Lama

NAME	CLUB	AGE	CAPS	GLS
GOALKEEPERS				
Fabien Barthez	Monaco	26	11	0
Bernard Lama	West Ham Utd (Eng)	35	36	0
Lionel Letizi	Metz	25	2	0
Lionel Charbonnier	Auxerre	31	1	0
DEFENDERS				
Laurent Blanc	Olympique Marseille	32	66	12
Marcel Desailly	Milan (Ita)	29	40	2
Franck Leboeuf	Chelsea (Eng)	30	12	2
Lilian Thuram	Parma (Ita)	26	31	0
Vincent Candela	AS Roma (Ita)	24	9	0
Bixente Lizarazu	Bayern Munich (Ger)	28	30	1
Pierre Laigle	Sampdoria (Ita)	27	8	0
Martin Djetou	Monaco	23	3	0
MIDFIELDERS				
Alain Boghossian	Sampdoria (Ita)	27	5	0
Emmanuel Petit	Arsenal (Eng)	27	18	0
Didier Deschamps	Juventus (Ita)	29	67	4
Patrick Vieira	Arsenal (Eng)	21	6	0
Christian Karembeu	Real Madrid (Spa)	27	30	1
Zinedine Zidane	Juventus (Ita)	25	31	8
Ibrahim Ba	Milan (Ita)	25	8	2
Sabri Lamouchi	Auxerre	26	11	1
Robert Pires	Metz	24	11	2
Bernard Diomede	Auxerre	24	3	0
FORWARDS				
Youri Djorkaeff	Internazionale (Ita)	30	35	15
Stephane Guivarc'h	Auxerre	27	5	1
David Trezeguet	Monaco	20	3	0
Christophe Dugarry	Olympique Marseille	26	21	2
Nicolas Anelka	Arsenal (Eng)	19	1	0

Players to watch

ZINEDINE ZIDANE >
France's prospects are very much tied up in the form of the lanky midfielder who, with a little more consistency, has everything: tackling, passing, shooting, lasting the pace, judging the angles.

STEPHANE GUIVARC'H >>
He's not even guaranteed a game, but if Guivarc'h gets on, he might well seize the chance to show some of his club form – he's been top scorer in France for two seasons running.

THE VIEW FROM FRANCE

REX GOWAR, Reuters

"Nothing less than outright victory will suffice for France. Their strength is in possessing a generation of players as gifted as the Michel Platini-led squad who were crowned European champions 14 years ago. Home advantage does have the potential to backfire on teams but quality sides like England in 1966, West Germany in 1974 and Argentina four years later have proved that the trick can be done.

"Aime Jacquet has done well in restoring morale after the catastrophic failures to reach the 1990 and 1994 finals. His headache, however, is who to turn to if Zinedine Zidane, Platini's natural successor, is injured or out of sorts after a tough season in Italy.

"The big challenge is that Jacquet's men are obliged not only to win the World Cup but to do so in style for a public which considers the manner of the national team's victory all important."

Flat out for glory...South Africa have their sights set on success in France

The lottery winners

Getting to France is a triumph for a rejuvenated nation

IN CHOOSING only 13 of the 22-man squad that did so well to finish runners-up at the African Nations Cup finals in February, new South African coach Philippe Troussier made it clear he will be his own man in France, his native country.

This is despite the fact that his predecessor, Jomo Sono, did a remarkable job in revamping the group of players that secured World Cup qualification and introducing some exciting new talent to the South African squad.

Troussier has brought back several of the old Clive Barker brigade, reasoning that experience is going to be vital for the matches against France, Denmark and Saudi Arabia in Group C.

There have been recalls for the likes of Andre Arendse, Shaun Bartlett and Eric Tinkler, who had high-profile roles in the World Cup qualifying campaign, during which Bafana Bafana lost only one of eight games on the road to the finals.

Troussier also named nine uncapped players in his preliminary group of 28, five of them spotted on his European tour in March, and the others in games at the end of the South African season.

Here he might have stretched himself a little thin, leaving out talent such as Dumisa Ngobe and Brandon Silent in place of a few unknowns.

Troussier, who took over the South African job only in February, after previous experience with Nigeria and Burkina Faso, has had little time to work with his team, running only two camps for locally based players in Johannesburg, and one with 18 of the foreign-based contingent in Zurich.

All lasted only two days and were designed more to give Troussier a chance to impart his playing philosophy to his squad than anything else.

The coach was not too happy with the locals and ran into a media riot over his 'hard-man' military-style motivational methods. He was more pleased with the foreign-based players and they will be the backbone of the squad in France.

Troussier says he has preferred players playing regular first-team football and those with experience and physical strength. He also adds that his squad is a generous mix of talent that will allow him to switch his various selections in France.

New faces include Dutch goalkeeper Hans Vonk of Heerenveen, who took South African citizenship in time to be considered. He was born in South Africa but left the country with his parents while still a toddler.

The same goes for Marc Arnold, who has had a remarkable rise to prominence this season with Hertha Berlin in the Bundesliga. He will battle with John Moeti and Tinkler for the defensive midfield role.

Pierre Issa is another of the 'legionnaires' but he has already earned a Bafana Bafana cap and has just made the squad after recovering from a long-term knee injury. The exciting Delron Buckley is another of the newcomers, a former Under-20 captain who has also come back from a long absence.

There is criticism of the decision to include players with little connection with South Africa, save for the fact they were born there. But Troussier has brushed that off with the contempt that it deserves.

South Africa's ambitions at the World Cup are modest. Qualifying for the finals for the first time, after only six years back in international competition following the lifting of the apartheid-induced sanctions, already represents success.

It was done in a breathless manner, at the tail-end of a lottery of a qualifying competition, with victories in the last three matches being achieved when nothing less than those three wins would have sufficed.

But now Bafana Bafana are on the way to France, with at least some hope of making it past the opening round and into the knockout stages.

Mark Gleeson

HOW THEY QUALIFIED

AFRICAN SECTION, FIRST ROUND
01.06.96.....Malawi-South Africa.....0-1
15.06.96.....South Africa-Malawi.....3-0
South Africa win 4-0 on agg and qualify for second round

SECOND ROUND, GROUP 3
09.11.96.....South Africa-DR Congo 1-0
11.01.97.....Zambia-South Africa.....0-0
06.04.97.....Congo-South Africa 2-0
27.04.97.....DR Congo-South Africa.....1-2
08.06.97.....South Africa-Zambia.....3-0
17.08.97 ....South Africa-Congo 1-0

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
*South Africa	6	4	1	1	7	3	13
Congo	6	3	1	2	5	5	10
Zambia	6	2	2	2	7	6	8
DR Congo	6	0	2	4	4	9	2

*South Africa qualify for finals

FRANCE 98 SCHEDULE
June 12,
v France, Marseille
June 18,
v Denmark, Toulouse
June 24,
v Saudi Arabia, Bordeaux

QUESTIONS TO THE COACH

'The French will be vulnerable when we play the first game'

Philippe Troussier

● ***South Africa play your native country, France, in your first game. What do you make of it?***
After the national anthems are played and we get ready to play the match, things will be different. After all the hype, it will be just 11 against 11 – and France need to beware of us. It's great that we are playing them in the first game because everything will be quite volatile then, nobody will have settled down at that stage. The French will be vulnerable.

● ***What about the other two teams in the group, Denmark and Saudi Arabia?***
The Danes are a strong team, they play good football and are strong in the air. Physically, all the players are strong. I'm not worried about them or afraid. I have my strategy in place for them and am confident. The problem with Saudi Arabia is that we play them last and it might be the most vital game of all for us.

● ***How did you choose your team?***
When I select a player, I do so on merit, not because of name or reputation. They must be playing full-time at their clubs, and scoring goals if they are in a position where they are expected to do so. I have looked at the level of football they are playing and if they are playing regularly; that is important. But only once my final squad is chosen will I be able to speak on why I selected certain players and not others.

● ***There are suggestions that you have been told to pick certain players by the administrators...***
That has never been the strategy of the South African Football Association and I have not received any messages about what the make-up of the squad should be or how I should choose my team.

● ***What will the make-up of your team be like?***
For the moment, I am not sure. It is not settled yet. I am weighing up my options with one or two players. I have no specific pattern – the important thing is to be flexible. I want to be able to move things around so that if we have injuries, or our opponents play a certain system, we'll be able to adapt accordingly. I will prepare the team in such a way that there will be a lot of room for accommodating various options.

● ***Have the South African players, after their long isolation, caught up with the rest of the world?***
The important thing is to be able to call on players based outside the country. This increases the mental strength of the players almost immediately. It is also very important to accept foreign coaches and their ideas and, most of all, to accept help from outside. Look at what Arsene Wenger has done for Arsenal. He was virtually unknown in England, but two years after getting the job he has taken the club to new heights. You must remember that the world is changing all the time.

● ***What are your World Cup ambitions?***
My first ambition is to get to the second round. After that, the tournament becomes wide open. We could be very dangerous. I don't want to make promises, but we will work hard and go along step by step.

Interview: Mark Gleeson

HOW THEY LINE UP

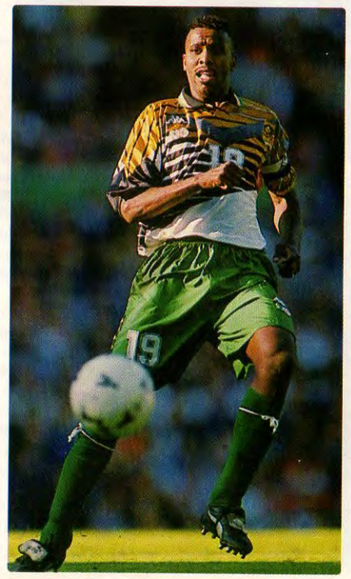
South Africa have various options, either to focus on utilising their skilful midfield or exploit the wing play of Nyathi and Mkhalele. Masinga's height makes him the perfect target man and McCarthy is sharp enough to feed off him.

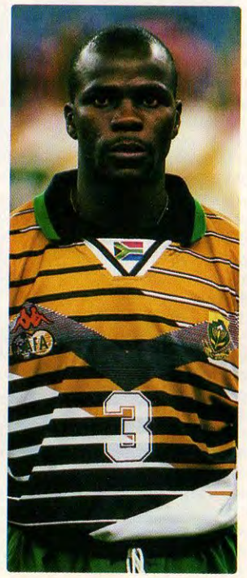
NAME	CLUB	AGE	CAPS	GLS
GOALKEEPERS				
Andre Arendse	Fulham (Eng)	30	27	0
Brian Baloyi	Kaizer Chiefs	24	8	0
Paul Evans	Supersport United	24	0	0
Hans Vonk	Heerenveen (Hol)	28	0	0
DEFENDERS				
Mark Fish	Bolton Wndrs (Eng)	24	37	2
Pierre Issa	Marseille (Fra)	22	1	0
Willem Jackson	Orlando Pirates	26	12	0
Themba Mnguni	Mamelodi Sundowns	24	3	0
David Nyathi	St Gallen (Swi)	29	35	1
Lucas Radebe	Leeds United (Eng)	29	41	1
MIDFIELDERS				
Marc Arnold	Hertha Berlin (Ger)	27	0	0
Quinton Fortune	Atletico Madrid (Spa)	21	6	0
Doctor Khumalo	Kaizer Chiefs	30	43	9
Helman Mkhalele	Kayserispor (Tur)	28	35	7
John Moeti	Orlando Pirates	30	23	0
John Moshoeu	Fenerbahce (Tur)	32	44	6
Eric Tinkler	Barnsley (Eng)	27	30	1
FORWARDS				
Brendan Augustine	LASK Linz (Aut)	26	26	4
Delron Buckley	VfL Bochum (Ger)	20	0	0
Phil Masinga	Bari (Ita)	28	41	14
Benedict McCarthy	Ajax Amsterdam (Hol)	20	10	7
Shaun Bartlett	MetroStars (USA)	25	23	6
Jerry Sikhosana	Orlando Pirates	28	6	0

Players to watch

LUCAS RADEBE>> Star man and captain, a surprise revelation in midfield at February's African Nations Cup finals after moving from defence.

DAVID NYATHI>> Defender already spotted by the Italian scouts. He has the ability to impress many more with his quick dashes down the wings and his probing crosses. He's good at the back, too.





THE VIEW FROM S AFRICA

NEIL TOVEY, former captain of Bafana Bafana

"South Africa have the capability to create a surprise but they will need to work on a lot of aspects of their game. I think they could be a surprise package but in the larger picture they have to beware their defensive frailties.

"Certainly the attacking flair of the team is a strength. This is where they could catch a lot of teams on the backfoot. But when they lose the ball, South Africa are not really organised. In fact, the all-round defensive ability is not professional enough. They need to work on getting this aspect together otherwise they are going to be punished."

HOW THEY QUALIFIED

ASIAN SECTION, FIRST ROUND

GROUP 1

16.03.97.....Chinese Taipei-Saudi Arabia 0-2
18.03.97.....Malaysia-Saudi Arabia 0-0
20.03.97.....Bangladesh-Saudi Arabia...1-4
27.03.97.....Saudi Arabia-Bangladesh...3-0
29.03.97.....Saudi Arabia-Malaysia 3-0
31.03.97.....Saudi Arabia-Chinese Taipei ...6-0

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
***Saudi Arabia..**	**6**	**5**	**1**	**0**	**18**	**1**	**16**
Malaysia	6	3	2	1	5	3	11
Chinese Taipei ..	6	1	1	4	4	13	4
Bangladesh.....	6	1	0	5	4	14	3

*Saudi Arabia qualify for second round

SECOND ROUND, GROUP A

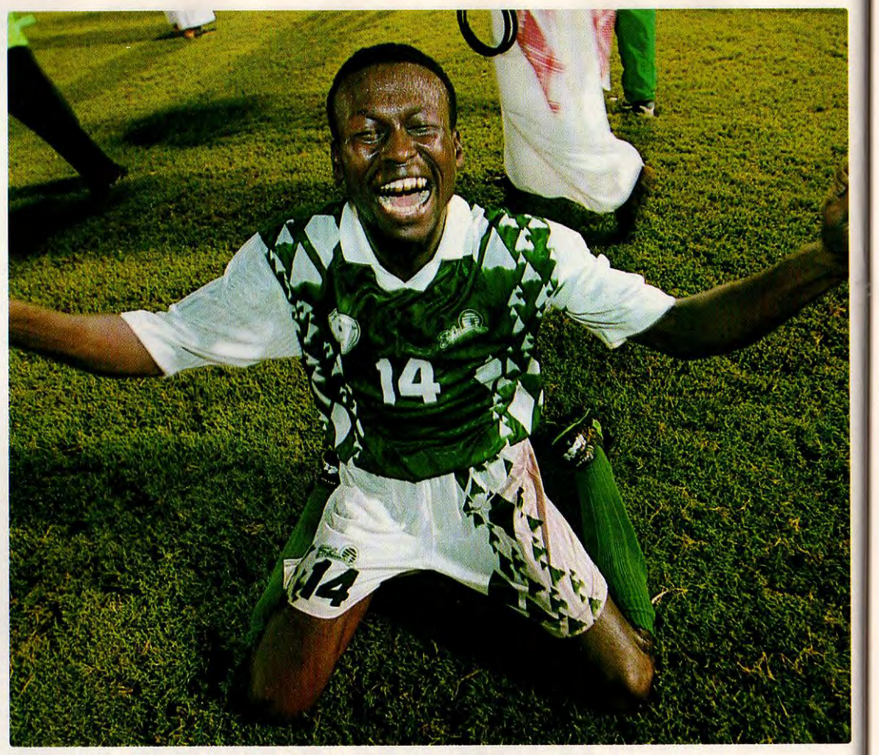
14.09.97.....Saudi Arabia-Kuwait 2-1
19.09.97.....Iran-Saudi Arabia 1-1
03.10.97.....China PR-Saudi Arabia 1-0
11.10.97.....Saudi Arabia-Qatar 1-0
17.10.97.....Kuwait-Saudi Arabia 2-1
24.10.97.....Saudi Arabia-Iran 1-0
06.11.97.....Saudi Arabia-China PR 1-1
12.11.97.....Qatar-Saudi Arabia 0-1

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
***Saudi Arabia..**	**8**	**4**	**2**	**2**	**8**	**6**	**14**
Iran	8	3	3	2	13	8	12
China PR	8	3	2	3	11	14	11
Qatar.....	8	3	1	4	7	10	10
Kuwait.....	8	2	2	4	7	8	8

*Saudi Arabia qualify as group winners

FRANCE 98 SCHEDULE

June 12,
v Denmark, Lens
June 18,
v France, Saint-Denis
June 24,
v South Africa, Bordeaux



Thrilled to be back...the Saudis make it to the finals again

The Brazilian connection

The Saudis are set to build on the winning ways of 94

CARLOS ALBERTO PARREIRA kept the Saudi Arabian Federation waiting before signing a lucrative seven-month contract to take them to the World Cup finals. Had any other coach dared to make them wait, the proud Saudis would doubtless have looked elsewhere. But Carlos Alberto's World Cup pedigree is ideal, and the Saudis knew it. Only one coach in the World Cup can match his cosmopolitan experience – Bora Milutinovic. Both men have coached three nations at a finals tournament, and are preparing to do so with a fourth. Parreira coached Kuwait in 1982, the United Arab Emirates in 1990 and Brazil's World Cup-winning side of 1994. Milutinovic guided Mexico in 1986, Costa Rica in 1990, the USA in 1994 and now leads Nigeria.

The Saudis approached Carlos Alberto some weeks before the finals draw in Marseille last December, but he kept them waiting until after the draw had been made. "If Saudi Arabia had been drawn in the same group as Brazil then it would have been hard for me to accept their offer," he says. "The World Cup is unlike anything else. The pressure is enormous. Leading another nation out against my own country would have been too much for anyone in Brazil to understand. When it comes to the World Cup, people go crazy."

Carlos Alberto had a head start with the Saudis. Not only had he worked there before, but local officials and fans love Brazilian soccer. Also, the environment in which they learn the game mirrors that of the four-times world champions: hard pitches and hot sun – conditions which demand outstanding technical dexterity.

He was fortunate to take over a team with a firm backbone already in place. Mohammed Al-Deayea is probably the finest goalkeeper in Asia at the moment despite still being only 25. Evidence is easily available from the fact that he has represented Saudi Arabia at international level on more than 90 occasions. His success is not, perhaps, surprising because goalkeeping is a family speciality: Al-Deayea's elder brother was his predecessor in the national team and was in the side when the Saudis won the 1992 Asian Cup.

In midfield, Khalid Al-Muwallid was one of the Saudi players who surprised the mainstream international community with his skill and perception at the 1994 finals. Now he has added an eye for goal to his midfield diligence, having scored six times in the World Cup qualifiers.

His most important goal was the last-minute decider against Iran in Riyadh in the closing stages of the second round. When the group was over, the Saudis were just two points clear of their old rivals.

Up front is Saeed Al-Owairan, who dribbled from deep inside his own half to score against Belgium in Washington four years ago, probably the finest solo goal the World Cup finals have ever seen. Not much has been heard of Al-Owairan since then, for the very good reason that he was suspended for the best part of two years after being caught attending an illegal drinks party.

Saudi Arabia were thus denied his talents both in winning the 1996 Asian Cup and in qualifying for France 98. They should be all the more dangerous for his return. "I made a mistake and paid for it," Al-Owairan says. "Now I must concentrate on making sure the future is kind to me."

Four years ago Saudi Arabia, at their debut finals, reached the second round before losing to Sweden. Anything less this time will be a major disappointment, even though they are grouped with hosts France, Denmark and newcomers South Africa.

Since the late 1970s the Saudis have pumped millions of dollars into their football. Their first reward was in winning the World Under-17 Cup in Scotland in 1989. Half a dozen of the players who beat their hosts in a penalty shoot-out at Hampden in the final made it to USA 94. Most hope to be on active service again. Before Carlos Alberto took over, Portuguese manager Nelo Vingada was dismissed midway into the final qualifying round, when a meagre 1-0 win over Qatar was considered an embarrassment, leaving German coach Otto Pfister to bring Saudi Arabia safely through to France before being replaced by Carlos Alberto.

He is not the Carlos Alberto who captained Brazil to World Cup victory in Mexico in 1970. But Saudi Arabia nevertheless expect big things of their own Brazilian connection.

Keir Radnedge

QUESTIONS TO THE COACH...

'The pace in France will be much quicker than in the US'

Carlos Alberto Parreira

● ***What target have you set yourselves for the finals?***
France will get through the first round, obviously, so that leaves three of us fighting to get out of our group. Our vital game is our last, against South Africa. If we win that we could go through, even if we have taken just one point aganst Denamrk and France.

● ***Who do you think will win the trophy?***
The usual candidates: Brazil, Argentina, France, Italy and Germany – in that order.

● ***Which players and teams will be the real surprises of the finals?***
If I named any, then they would no longer be surprises. But I think Nigeria will take some beating.

● ***And the outstanding individual of the tournament?***
Saeed Al-Owairan, our attacking midfielder. He could cause problems to any opponent.

● ***What technical or tactical developments should we expect to see?***
I think this will be a far more competitive tournament than USA 94 because of the weather conditions. When Germany played South Korea in Dallas four years ago the temperature was 40 degrees. This time the pace will be much quicker.

● ***How will the larger size and structure of this year's competition affect your preparations?***
Very little, actually. Where you play your games doesn't alter the number of them that you need to win if you are going to capture the World Cup. The real competition starts once the first phase is over.

● ***How do you rate your group opponents?***
Denmark are a very well-balanced side. South Africa have done really well at the last two African Nations Cups and are a team which must now be respected. France, at home, are bound to be strong. So it's going to be a really tough tournament for us.

● ***Does a good show by the Saudis really matter in the worldwide picture?***
Yes, very much so – it could bring a lot of benefits to Asian football. All countries now need to play well and get themselves noticed on the global scale.

● ***What are the prospects for a Saudi repeat of their 1994 success?***
I certainly think we can do something similar to what we did in the USA. We've been there now and we know what to do.

● ***You coached Brazil to victory four years ago. How do you rate the current Brazilian squad in comparison?***
Technically the present squad is better, but how they will perform as a team, who knows? That's the question we all want answered. To win the World Cup, you have to prepare well, but have they done so?

Interview: Andrew Warshaw

HOW THEY LINE UP

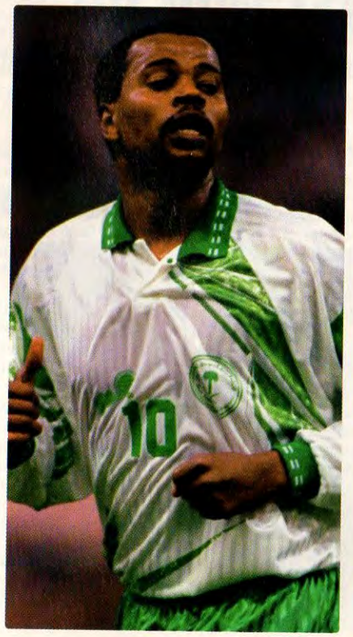
Typically Asian, playing in the 'rush-and-rest' style so often dictated by the climate. The Saudis are not particularly strong in the tackle (which doesn't stop them from contesting possession with great spirit) or in the air, but they are quick off the mark, have excellent ball skills and they do not miss many chances.

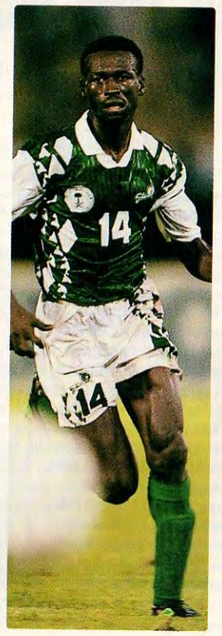
NAME	CLUB	AGE	CAPS	GLS
GOALKEEPERS				
Mohammed Al-Deayea	Al-Tae	25	90	0
Hussein Al-Sadiq	Al-Qadisiya	24	63	0
Turki Saleh Awad	Al-Hilal	25	0	0
DEFENDERS				
Mohammed Al-Khilaiwi	Al-Ittihad	27	86	0
Ahamed Jamil Madani	Al-Ittihad	28	134	5
Abdullah Zebramawi	Al-Ahli	24	79	4
Ahmed Al-Dosary	Al-Hilal	21	10	0
Hussain Sulaimani	Al-Ahli	23	35	1
Mohammed Al-Jahani	Al-Ahli	22	60	0
Mohammed Al-Sahafi	Al-Ittihad	22	4	0
MIDFIELDERS				
Obeid Al-Dossary	Al-Wehda	22	58	12
Ibrahim Al-Shahrani	Al-Ahli	23	17	5
Khamis Al-Owairan	Al-Hilal	20	50	24
Ibrahim Al-Harbi	Al-Nassr	23	42	0
Khalid Al-Temawi	Al-Hilal	30	43	5
Khalid Al-Muwallid	Al-Ahli	26	23	14
Fuad Anwar Amin	Al-Shebab	25	44	9
Hamzah Abdullah Saleh	Al-Ahli	31	36	0
FORWARDS				
Mohammed Al-Sahafi	Al-Ittihad	22	2	0
Saeed Al-Owairan	Al-Shebab	29	50	24
Samir Al-Jaber	Al-Hilal	25	52	23
Fahad Mehallel	Al-Shebab	27	82	20
Salem Sarour Al-Alawi	Al-Shebab	25	0	0

Players to watch

SAEED AL-OWAIRAN>> Best known for that astounding goal in USA 94, but he had achieved plenty before then and even now, approaching 31, he is still capable of catching the eye. Another good tournament is by no means beyond this fast, incisive striker, despite the lengthy lay-off due to his suspension.

KHALID AL-MUWALLID>> A midfielder who also showed excellent form in the USA four years ago. These days he may be better still: quick, strong, with good ball control and passing ability. He also has few superiors when it comes to taking penalties.





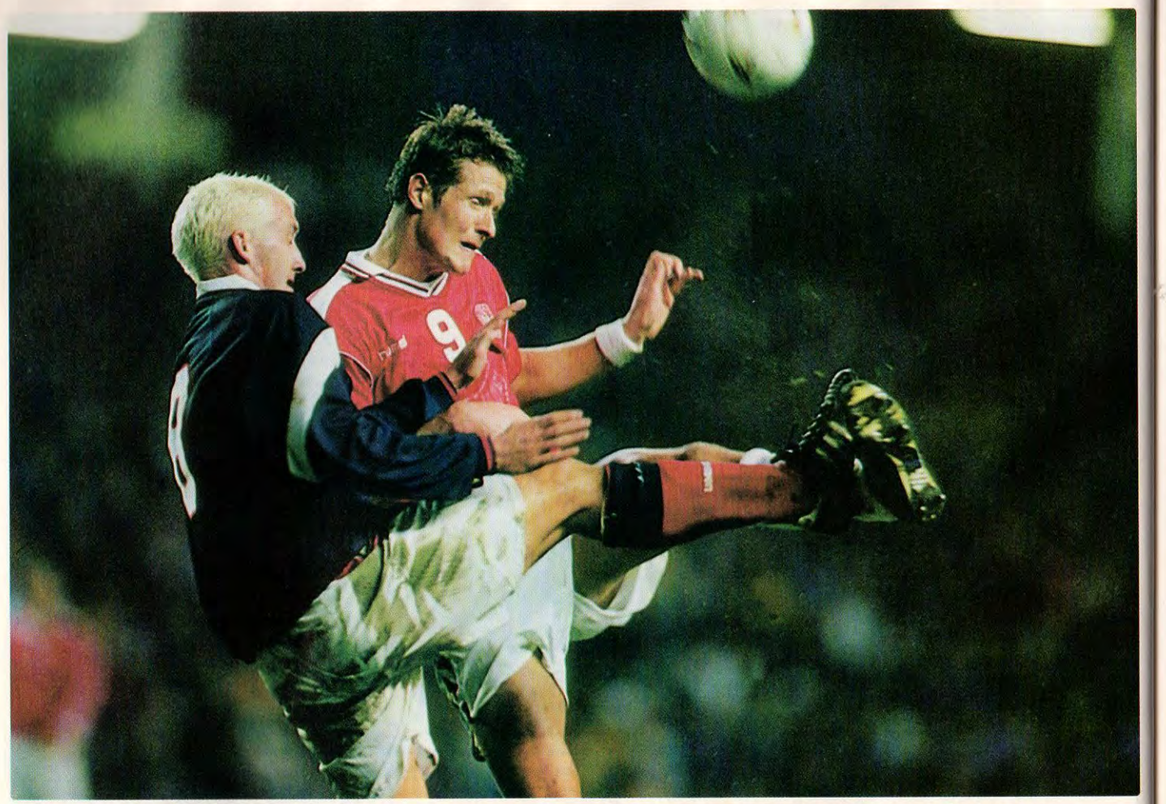
THE VIEW FROM SAUDI ARABIA

MOHAMMED AL-SHANI, The Week

"What is most important is that we do not fall below the level of 1994. Perhaps four years ago, the Saudi national team went a little bit further in the competition than it was worthy of doing. But in the past four years our game has made some progress, so we must not fall behind the level we reached in the United States.

"Our team played a counter-attacking game for much of the qualifying tournament and it is very important we keep up this style of play in France because we dare not take too many risks. If you lose the first match it is hard to recover.

"It's important having Carlos Alberto back as our coach because he has worked a lot with Saudi players and he knows how to get the best out of them. I am not sure that has been the case with all our foreign national coaches. He is our guarantee of strength. I suppose the level of expectation after 1994, is our weakness. Then we went to the World Cup with no pressure. This time it's different."



Up in the air...World Cup success for striker Peter Moller (right) and his Danish team-mates is heavily dependent on the performances of a few key players

Only the best will do

To do well in France, Denmark must play at the very top of their game

PETER SCHMEICHEL's hamstring injury cast a cloud over Denmark's World Cup preparations, because everyone knows the giant Manchester United goalkeeper provides the foundation for any success the Danes may achieve in France.

He could play only half the match in a 2-0 home defeat to Norway in late April, which dampened rising expectations. Afterwards, Michael Laudrup claimed the defeat could help Denmark's chances in France 98, enabling them to approach the tournament with realism rather than the heady optimism which destroyed the Dynamite side back in 1986.

So it could, and another bonus would be a return to fitness of talented young wing-back Ole Tobiasen, who was in sparkling form with Ajax before suffering a serious knee injury.

The truth is that Denmark's first-choice side, playing to their full potential, could be a surprise packet in the tournament, and even emulate the achievement of neighbours Sweden, who reached the semi-finals four years ago. But everything has to click perfectly under easy-going Swedish coach Bo Johansson, who has brought about a significant improvement in morale after dismal failure at Euro 96.

Schmeichel's importance cannot be over-estimated, not only because he is a brilliant goalkeeper but also because he is the major personality in the squad. Barring further problems, he should be fit by the time the World Cup begins, and should have passed the emotional milestone of his 100th international cap in the final warm-up match against Cameroon in Copenhagen. That match should also see Michael Laudrup win his 99th cap.

The Danes proved in the qualifiers that they can defend well enough, and that should enable them to move through from their group ahead of Saudi Arabia and South Africa. But progression beyond the second round, where a possible clash against bogey side Spain awaits, will happen only if they find a cure for their goalscoring problem.

Johansson admits that that is the area of the side which still troubles him, and why he is considering a couple of wild cards such as Under-21 stars Carsten Fredgaard, a speedy striker with Lyngby, and Jesper Gronkjaer, a skilful dribbler on his way from Aab Aalborg to Ajax in the summer. There is also Claus Jensen of Lyngby, a youngster Johansson describes as "a talented, skilful Laudrup-type of footballer who I am monitoring closely".

None of the partners for Brian Laudrup that the coach has tried so far has been a consistent success, with PSV's Peter Moller perhaps the slight favourite to start the campaign in France. Brondby's Ebbe Sand, top-scorer in the Danish Superliga, was given a debut in the Norway match, but failed to impress.

Only if Schmeichel is at his best, the Laudrups sparkle and one of the strikers suddenly discovers his shooting boots will the Danes have a tournament to remember. More likely, sadly, is an exit either at the group stage or in the second round.

Jim Holden

HOW THEY QUALIFIED

EUROPEAN SECTION, GROUP 1

01.09.96.....Slovenia-Denmark..... 0-2
09.10.96.....Denmark-Greece 2-1
29.03.97.....Croatia-Denmark 1-1
30.04.97.....Denmark-Slovenia 4-0
08.06.97 .....Denmark-Bosnia 2-0
20.08.97.....Bosnia-Denmark 3-0
10.09.97.....Denmark-Croatia 3-1
11.10.97.....Greece-Denmark 0-0

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
***Denmark**	**8**	**5**	**2**	**1**	**14**	**6**	**17**
Croatia	8	4	3	1	17	12	15
Greece	8	4	2	2	11	4	14
Bosnia-H'a	8	3	0	5	9	14	9
Slovenia	8	0	1	7	5	20	1

*Denmark qualify as group winners

FRANCE 98 SCHEDULE
June 12,
v Saudi Arabia, Lens
June 18,
v South Africa, Toulouse
June 24,
v France, Lyon

QUESTIONS TO THE COACH

'France must be the favourites to win our section'

Bo Johansson

● ***What would be a good result in France?***
That is impossible to answer. You have to play the games one at a time and see what you can do. To say, for example, that a good result for us is to reach the quarter-finals, is ridiculous.

● ***How do you rate your group opponents?***
France must be the favourites to win our section, with the other three, ourselves, South Africa and Saudi Arabia on a similar level. The French have some great players like Zidane – he is special at the moment. They also have the benefit of home advantage, but that will also be an enormous pressure for them. I don't know as much about the others, but South Africa have fine players in Phil Masinga and Mark Fish.

● ***Who are your key men?***
The Laudrup brothers and Peter Schmeichel. Normally, I answer that everyone is a key player because you don't want too much pressure on individuals. But it is fantastic to have a world-class goalkeeper like Schmeichel.

● ***Who will win the Cup?***
Brazil must be favourites, with Germany as their closest rivals. Brazil are so skilful and are also so experienced at tournament football. That is really important. The Germans and the Italians also have that experience. Spain could also be in contention. When the tournament is played in Europe it is always a team from Europe that wins, apart from 1958 in Sweden, when Brazil won. I remember that because it was the first match I saw on TV, as a 16-year-old.

● ***Who will be the surprise teams?***
It could be anyone; South Africa, for example. I know too little about too many teams to predict that, but they are all capable of causing a surprise. In 1994 it was Sweden and Romania, and who would have thought that?

● ***Who will be the star players?***
Some of the Brazilians, probably, such as Ronaldo, Rivaldo and Roberto Carlos. Maybe it could be Oliver Bierhoff from Germany. I could mention Spain's Raul, too, and some of the Yugoslavs and Croatians will be worth watching.

● ***Will we see any tactical innovations?***
It would surprise me. I don't like the word tactics, and prefer to talk about ways of organising the team. It is possible, but I think we have seen all the variations now. Football is moving in the wrong direction, becoming too defensive. There are nine defensive players now behind the ball when you lose possession. It is not constructive. It is a little like basketball, and goals are becoming more and more difficult to score. We hope Brazil will show another attractive way, but I'm not confident about it.

● ***How did you instill a new team spirit in the Danish team?***
It wasn't me! Danish players have always been smiling. As a Swede I know they have always played with a smile on their lips. The thing we changed was the style, from man-to-man marking in defence to a zonal system.

● ***The Danish Superliga has improved standards. Has that helped you?***
I'm not sure the standard is much better. The best players still move abroad and that doesn't help.

● ***Is Denmark's biggest problem scoring goals?***
It is always the hardest thing in football – putting the ball in the net. What is the easiest thing? To protect the goal. Football is very simple and clear in that way, and a problem for us who want to see an improvement in the game and make it more attacking. We have to work at it harder. The defence is quite easy to arrange, but in training we work 95 per cent on attacking. We rarely speak about defence.

Interview: Jim Holden

HOW THEY LINE UP

Coach Johansson has yet to decide on whether to play a zonal 4-4-2 or 3-4-3 formation. Either system would be a break from the 3-5-2 system employed by his predecessor Richard Moller Nielsen. Under either system the 11 players would be the same, but with a 3-4-3, Heintze moves into midfield and the Laudrup brothers line up with Moller in a potentially potent attack.

NAME	CLUB	AGE	CAPS	GLS
GOALKEEPERS				
Peter Schmeichel	Manchester Utd (Eng)	34	98	0
Mogens Krogh	Brondby	34	7	0
Peter Kjaer	Silkeborg	32	0	0
DEFENDERS				
Soeren Colding	Brondby	25	3	0
Jes Hogh	Fenerbahce (Tur)	31	35	1
Jacob Laursen	Derby County (Eng)	26	21	0
Marc Rieper	Celtic (Sco)	29	51	1
Ole Tobiasen	Ajax Amsterdam (Hol)	22	2	0
Jan Heintze	Bayer Leverkusen (Ger)	34	37	1
Michael Schjonberg	Kaiserslautern (Ger)	31	26	3
MIDFIELDERS				
Thomas Helveg	Udinese (Ita)	26	28	1
Ole Bjur	Brondby	29	3	1
Bjarne Goldbaek	FC Copenhagen	29	11	0
Morten Wieghorst	Celtic (Sco)	27	9	2
Per Frandsen	Bolton Wanderers (Eng)	28	10	0
Peter Nielsen	FC Copenhagen	29	6	1
Allan Nielsen	Tottenham (Eng)	26	14	5
Michael Laudrup	Ajax Amsterdam (Den)	33	97	36
FORWARDS				
Jon Dahl Tomasson	Newcastle Utd (Eng)	21	4	0
Brian Laudrup	Rangers (Sco)	29	75	19
Mikkel Beck	Middlesbrough (Eng)	24	14	3
Miklos Molnar	Sevilla (Spa)	28	8	2
Peter Moller	PSV Eindhoven (Hol)	26	10	1
Per Pedersen	B Monchengladbach (Ger)	28	6	2
Ebbe Sand	Brondby	25	1	0

Players to watch

PETER SCHMEICHEL >
The Manchester United man has to be Denmark's star man. He's one of the world's top goalkeepers, and utterly essential to Denmark's cause; remember his fantastic saves during the victorious 1992 European Championship campaign?

OLE TOBIASEN >>
If he is properly fit then the full-back from Ajax should prove he has become a genuine international-class footballer.

THE VIEW FROM DENMARK

PREBEN ELKJAER, former international

"Denmark's team is well organised, and have a world-class goalkeeper in Peter Schmeichel who will always give the side a chance in matches. Seeing the imposing figure of Schmeichel in front of you is the last thing a striker wants.

"But it is obvious that the problem they have scoring goals is Denmark's main weakness. Brian Laudrup cannot be expected to do it all by himself, but you can't simply conjure up a goalscorer for a big tournament.

"As far as the competition in general is concerned, Ronaldo, of course, will be one of the players to watch. He is a fantastic striker when in the right mood. And then there's the incredible shooting of Roberto Carlos. Players like these bring excitement to football, and that is so important. From the Danish team I think Thomas Helveg will show what a fine player he has become at Udinese."

Rising star...Real's Morientes is set to lead the Spanish attack

HOW THEY QUALIFIED

EUROPEAN SECTION, GROUP 6

04.09.96.....Faroe Islands-Spain.....2-6
09.10.96.....Czech Republic-Spain 0-0
13.11.96.....Spain-Slovakia 4-1
14.12.96.....Spain-Yugoslavia.....2-0
18.12.96.....Malta-Spain 0-3
12.02.97.....Spain-Malta.....4-0
30.04.97.....Yugoslavia-Spain 1-1
08.06.97.....Spain-Czech Republic 1-0
24.09.97.....Slovakia-Spain 1-2
11.10.97.....Spain-Faroe Islands.....3-1

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
*Spain	10	8	2	0	26	6	26
Yugoslavia	10	7	2	1	29	7	23
Czech Rep	10	5	1	4	16	6	16
Slovakia	10	5	1	4	18	14	16
Faroe Islands	10	2	0	8	10	31	6
Malta	10	0	0	10	2	37	0

*Spain qualify as group winners

Recipe for success

Strength, skill, experience and spirit put Spain among the favourites

JAVIER CLEMENTE has the ingredients. Whether he can blend them into a dish tasty enough to set before the king in Paris – the scenario of Spain's last appearance in a major final – is another matter.

In the 1994 World Cup, and again in Euro 96, Clemente's teams seemed to have the right shape, the right attitude and the right bio-rhythms: sluggish starts, before gaining momentum, as champions so often do. But, on both occasions, they found themselves aboard the plane home just when they were looking like genuine title contenders.

Clemente leads the Spanish team with a unique brand of Basque phlegm. At Euro 96, after the penalty shoot-out against England had ended their tournament, he was addressing the media from a podium in the tunnel – the best press conference room Wembley could muster – when King Juan Carlos passed by on his way from the dressing-room. Clemente broke off in mid-sentence, shouted: "thanks for coming" and carried on. His cut-and-thrust relationship with the media has given him a volatile image but, in truth, his attitude and psychological reactions to pressure are as balanced as any other coach's. His ability to assess opponents is second to none.

His teams are an unknown quantity to the opposition, a factor he loves. He may complain about his lack of preparation for France (minimal, to say the least, with just one match) but on the up side, opponents' spies are short of information and his resources look better than ever.

Even though he's taking 36-year-old Andoni Zubizarreta to keep goal in his fourth, and final, World Cup before retiring, the average age of Clemente's squad is under 26, lower than ever before. More significantly, he has more attacking options than ever before. Kiko, Alfonso and Raul all provide the artistry, while Pizzi, Morientes and Etxeberria are blunter instruments designed to take on the heavy mob. In midfield, Guerrero and all-rounder Luis Enrique make prolific goalscoring contributions, and at the back, there are limitless combinations of strength, speed, aerial power and skill.

As for surprise inclusions in the squad, there's the call-up of Mallorca's temperamental central defender Ivan Campo (set to join Real Madrid) to replace the more robust Roberto Rios, who has been struggling to find his form. Real Sociedad's Agustin Aranzabal, who can operate as left-back, wing-back or midfielder, has been recalled and the uncapped Albert Celades has been chosen in place of the injured Josep Guardiola.

The absence of Barcelona's midfield organiser does, however, throw up the question as to whether or not the Spanish can play their way out from the back.

"Pep Guardiola is impossible to replace," Clemente admits. "He has a style of his own which is impossible to find in other players. He offers us a tactical variation which nobody else can supply."

Celades' distribution of the ball is on occasions reminiscent of that of his Barcelona team-mate, but he is more often caught in possession. He lacks the same presence, the influential personality and, possibly most worryingly, he suffered a dip in form during the last third of the League campaign.

"I'm being pretty pragmatic about this World Cup," Clemente adds. "I can't think of anyone who could give us a hammering. But then I can't really think of anyone we could hammer. We're just going there to give it a try."

Graham Turner

FRANCE 98 SCHEDULE

June 13,
v Nigeria, Nantes
June 19,
v Paraguay, Saint-Etienne
June 24,
v Bulgaria, Lens

QUESTIONS TO THE COACH

'Our current side have a winning mentality'

Javier Clemente

● ***How do you rate your group opponents?***
Without doubt we've been drawn in the strongest group. Everybody wanted to avoid Nigeria, and Paraguay and Bulgaria could also cause serious problems. However, I've got blind faith in my team and I think we'll make the second round.

● ***Who are your key men?***
It's not about key players, it's about footballers who understand the key to success is the team – that's why my squad is largely made up of versatile players. We function as a team unit and each piece has its role to play. I'd even say that the players who don't make the team are the key because of their role in training – pushing the starters is fundamental.

The absence of Pep Guardiola through injury is a blow because he's got special qualities – no other Spanish player has his vision. But we can cover his absence because of our team philosophy. What worries me is the physical state of my players. The Spanish League is the longest in Europe and the work we do at our training camp before France will be crucial.

● ***Who will win France 98?***
I honestly couldn't tell you. I just hope it's Spain! Thirty-two teams means more games, more quality opposition and more responsibility...

● ***Who will be the surprise teams and star players?***
I guess there'll be a surprise team as there always is, but I'd be pushed to say who. But there's no way a rank outsider is going to win the World Cup. As for the best players, that comes down to personal taste. I'm sorry if I bore people with this, but in my opinion the best players will always be mine.

● ***Will we see any tactical innovations ?***
I don't think so, there's not much left to be invented. All you can do is improve the way of doing what we already know. A coach's training methods can make a real difference, but you also need time – the one thing I don't get enough of. I don't know about others, but I'll vary Spain's tactics according to the opposition. Tactics don't have that much impact on the way a game pans out, they only change small details. I'll be happy if my players can recreate what we practise in training.

● ***What would be a good result for Spain?***
To win the World Cup would be magnificent! People don't realise how difficult it is to do well at major tournaments and it's getting more difficult all the time. To get to the semis would be very positive. But whatever happens I'll be happy with my players, as I know they'll give everything. You need time to build a team which we don't tend to have. I make up for it because I know the players so well and they're familiar with my working habits. I believe we have a great blend of quality, youth and experience.

● ***Spanish sides have been accused of lacking a winning mentality. You have six players from the 1992 Olympic-winning squad still involved in the team. Do they help?***
The current side have a winning mentality; it's one of their primary characteristics. They are born winners. When I took over, my aim was to form a compact group and with the players' support I think I've built a really solid unit. I've got a good relationship with my players, based on mutual respect and sincerity. I try not to let them down and vice-versa.

● ***Spain have possibly their best side ever, yet you are at loggerheads with the Spanish press...***
I don't have a bad relationship with the press. I'm always willing to talk to them and there's a mutual respect. The guys who can't open their mouths without lying, they're something else, and I won't put up with them. Believe me, there are more journalists I get on with than ones I don't. I've got a clear working majority.

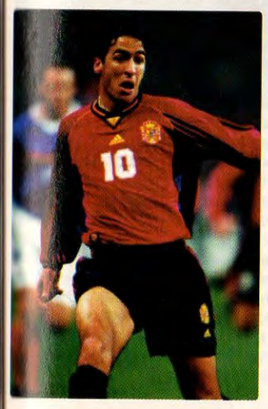
Interview: Jeff King

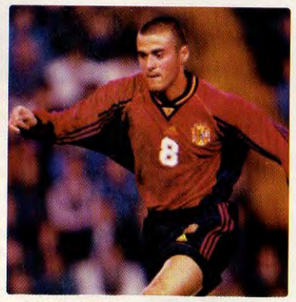
HOW THEY LINE UP

Clemente shuffles his players and his tactics according to the opposition. Guardiola's injury has reduced the options in midfield – Hierro may be the solitary holding midfielder, but Celades or Amor could join him. If Clemente goes for a back three rather than four, Aguilera comes in at right wing-back for Ferrer, and Abelardo is the third centre-back, with Nadal as sweeper. Sergi will play at left-back in either formation. Up front, Luis Enrique, Etxeberria and Raul are certain starters in attacking midfield positions behind a central striker, most likely Alfonso. Morientes, Kiko and Pizzi are strong alternatives to Alfonso. Zubizarreta is the first-choice goalkeeper.

NAME	CLUB	AGE	CAPS	GLS
GOALKEEPERS				
Andoni Zubizarreta	Valencia	36	123	0
Santiago Canizares	Real Madrid	28	9	0
Jose Molina	Atletico Madrid	27	1	0
DEFENDERS				
Sergi Barjuan	Barcelona	26	32	1
Miguel Angel Nadal	Barcelona	31	43	2
Abelardo Fernandez	Barcelona	28	39	2
Albert Ferrer	Barcelona	27	33	0
Rafael Alkorta	Athletic Bilbao	29	48	0
Fernando Hierro	Real Madrid	30	55	15
Carlos Aguilera	Atletico Madrid	29	4	0
Ivan Campo	Mallorca	24	1	0
Agustin Aranzabal	Real Sociedad	25	5	0
MIDFIELDERS				
Luis Enrique Martinez	Barcelona	28	35	7
Julen Guerrero	Athletic Bilbao	24	30	10
Guillermo Amor	Barcelona	30	32	4
Albert Celades	Barcelona	22	0	0
FORWARDS				
Juan Antonio Pizzi	Barcelona	29	20	6
Kiko Narvaez	Atletico Madrid	26	19	3
Raul Gonzalez	Real Madrid	20	12	2
Alfonso Perez	Real Betis	25	25	8
Fernando Morientes	Real Madrid	22	1	2
Joseba Etxeberria	Athletic Bilbao	20	3	2

Players to watch





<RAUL GONZALEZ
The boy wonder is Spain's great attacking hope. Out of sorts earlier in the year, but now back to his best.

LUIS ENRIQUE
Spain's Mr Versatile, a tenacious all-rounder who Clemente prefers to play in attack.

THE VIEW FROM SPAIN

JUAN PEDRO MARTINEZ, editor of Don Balon

"Spain are a very practical side: extremely strong at the back and quick to turn defence into attack, where we have plenty of players with an eye for goal. Our style is so direct the midfield practically doesn't exist. There is also a genuine sense of companionship and coach Clemente has got players who hate each other at club level to pull together when playing for Spain.

"But our players have never been tough mentally. We lack the Germans' willpower and the Italians' ability to manipulate tense situations. We also have an inferiority complex. If we played, say, Italy 100 times, we'd lose 99 in our heads before kick-off. Spanish legs seem to go when it really matters.

"Fernando Hierro is our key player because he best reflects the Clemente philosophy, while his qualities as a player – power, consistency, adaptability, refusal to play to the gallery – reflect the side's. Kiko is probably the most technically gifted player in the squad, while Raul and Luis Enrique are in the middle – guys who combine style with effectiveness. Sergi will be important, especially in a three-man defence with wing-backs, because he's so effective going forward. On the right, Atletico Madrid's Aguilera could be a surprise."

Heading the race...Taribo West and his Nigerian team-mates are rated as the African team most likely to lift the World Cup for the first time

Unpredictable as ever

The Super Eagles may fly – or they may not get off the ground

HOW THEY QUALIFIED

AFRICAN SECTION, GROUP 1

09.11.96.....Nigeria-Burkina Faso 2-0
12.01.97.....Kenya-Nigeria.....1-1
05.04.97.....Nigeria-Guinea 2-1
27.04.97.....Burkina Faso-Nigeria 1-2
07.06.97.....Nigeria-Kenya.....3-0
17.08.97.....Guinea-Nigeria 1-0

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
*Nigeria	6	4	1	1	10	4	13
Guinea	6	4	0	2	10	5	12
Kenya	6	3	1	2	11	12	10
Burkina Faso	6	0	0	6	7	17	0

*Nigeria qualify for finals

FRANCE 98 SCHEDULE
June 13,
v Spain, Nantes
June 19,
v Bulgaria, Paris
June 24,
v Paraguay, Toulouse

NIGERIA's Super Eagles are being written off as 25-1 bets for the World Cup, despite being Africa's only real hopes for a first World Cup title.

Three-time African Football of the Year Abedi Pele says he does not believe that the continent will deliver a World Cup winner until the 2006 event, and Nigerian midfielder Sunday Oliseh adds that he and his team-mates are aiming only for the semi-finals.

This comes in the wake of a disappointing, and disjointed performance by the Nigerians in their first serious match since they qualified for the finals last August.

They lost only 1-0 to the Germans in Cologne in April, but the performance by Bora Milutinovic's first-choice team showed little of their potential. Nigeria, a side brimming with individual talent, lacked cohesion, and in defence they looked brittle.

With only two warm-up matches left for the new coach, against Yugoslavia and Holland, there was little chance for the team to work on the problems.

Milutinovic might well have chosen the wrong option when he used a tournament in Hong Kong in January and a friendly in Jamaica in February to look at fringe candidates rather than attempt to decide on his first choices.

There remains healthy competition for places in the squad, which Milutinovic will announce after a training spell in Switzerland and a game against Yugoslavia in Belgrade.

Up front there are no shortage of candidates to lead the charge, with Rachidi Yekini showing glimpses of his old form in recent Swiss League matches and Emmanuel Amunike of Barcelona back in training after being diagnosed as having a degenerative bone condition.

The midfield is talent-laden, too, but in defence the coach will have to scramble to plug the holes that the likes of Spain and Bulgaria will seek to exploit at the finals. Another problem is that first-choice goalkeeper Ike Shoronmu of FC Zurich is unlikely to make the trip after breaking an arm in the last game of the Swiss season, leaving room for the unheralded William Okpara of Orlando Pirates to take over in goal and become probably the only Africa-based player in the first-choice team.

The starting 11 should also include Sunday Oliseh from Ajax, Victor Ikpeba from Monaco, Nwankwo Kanu and Taribo West from Inter, and the Turkey-based trio of Uche Okechukwu and Austin Okocha (Fenerbahce) and Daniel Amokachi of Besiktas.

Off the field, there is the ever-present problem of money, or lack of it. Players rejected a recent match bonus offer from the FA, and if this difficulty is not resolved, we could have a repeat of the poor performance that Cameroon gave in the USA in 1994, which was to a large extent the result of a pay dispute.

Nigeria, however, remain Africa's only real hope of progress, and we should remember that their players overcame similar problems of lack of preparation, poor administration and no bonus payments to win the Olympic gold in Atlanta in 1996.

There is always the chance they will do everything contrary to the norm, and still turn out winners. It is the Nigerian way.

Mark Gleeson

QUESTIONS TO THE COACH

'The team spirit is more important than the money'

Bora Milutinovic

● ***Can Nigeria match the gold medal they won two years ago at the Olympics?***
That was in 1996 and it is now 1998. Things have changed. A World Cup cannot be compared with the Olympic Games. The favourites will be the teams with World Cup experience.

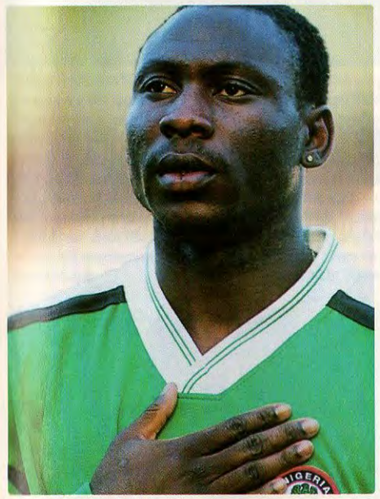
● ***The Nigeria job is a tough one, as your predecessors have found. How has it been for you?***
Football is my life and my job is to coach teams. The rest is superficial to me. Since I've been the coach, everyone has been helpful and friendly. All the intrigue does not interest me.

● ***But it was a big part of Nigeria's last World Cup campaign...***
You shouldn't believe all you read. A World Cup is simple. It is 11 players against another 11 chasing after a ball. You have to have a well-organised team, who have good communication. That we'll have in France. There won't be any problems. The quality of the players, the team spirit, is more important than the money earned.

● ***How do you rate your chances in France?***
Everybody involved with the team feels the weight of expectation and wants to do his best. This is the World Cup, and we know we have the experience and qualities to undertake the challenge. No matter how hard you analyse the event, anything is possible in the game of football. If I didn't know that earlier in my career then I certainly know it now, after having been involved in four World Cup finals! As for this one, it doesn't matter what people think about Nigeria. The important thing is we are in the finals. Now we can decide on how we play.

● ***But can you make an impact?***
Of course. If I did not think so, I would not have taken the job. We have the players to make it a memorable World Cup for Nigeria.

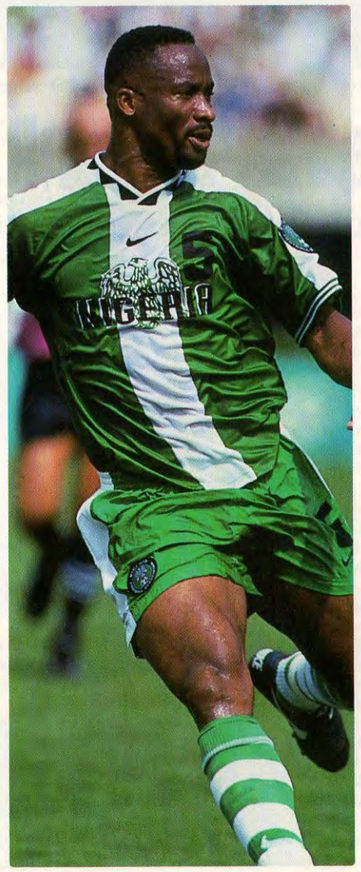
Interview: Mark Gleeson



Players to watch

DANIEL AMOKACHI
Striker who has had a tempestuous season with Besiktas but is still vital to Nigeria's hopes. He was their top goalscorer in the qualifiers and got a famous goal against Greece in the last World Cup finals. The Super Eagles will need more of the same in France.

UCHE OKECHUKWU>
Defender who is built like a tank and is the longest-serving player in the Nigerian squad, save for Rachidi Yekini. He has attracted less attention than his more charismatic compatriots but is a centre-back of great quality.



HOW THEY LINE UP

Nigeria have a strong strike force and there is healthy competition for places from the likes of Akpoborie, Babangida and Yekini. They also have some good options out wide, where Ikpeba and George can tease opposing defenders. Godwin Okpara is likely to be drafted into central defence to shore up a fragile looking back four, while Babayaro, who has spent much of the season out injured, could be a late choice at left-back.

NAME	CLUB	AGE	CAPS	GLS
GOALKEEPERS				
Peter Rufai	Deportivo (Spa)	34	65	1
Abiodun Baruwa	FC Sion (Swi)	23	3	0
William Okpara	Orlando Pirates (SAf)	29	6	0
DEFENDERS				
Austin Eguavoen	Torpedo Moscow (Rus)	32	52	0
Mobi Oparaku	Kapellen (Bel)	21	7	0
Celestine Babayaro	Chelsea (Eng)	19	6	0
Uche Okechukwu	Fenerbahce (Tur)	30	41	0
Taribo West	Internazionale (Ita)	24	8	0
Chidi Nwanu	Roda JC (Hol)	31	20	0
Ben Iroha	San Jose Clash (USA)	28	30	1
Uche Okafor	Kansas City Wiz (USA)	30	33	0
Godwin Okpara	Strasbourg (Fra)	25	6	0
Patrick Paschal	Genclerbirligi (Tur)	21	1	0
MIDFIELDERS				
Augustine Okocha	Fenerbahce (Tur)	24	26	2
Sunday Oliseh	Ajax Amsterdam (Hol)	23	22	1
Garba Lawal	Roda JC (Hol)	24	3	0
Wilson Oruma	Lens (Fra)	21	4	1
Mutiu Adepoju	Real Sociedad (Spa)	27	35	3
Finidi George	Real Betis (Spa)	27	36	3
Stephen Musa	Saarbrucken (Ger)	23	0	0
FORWARDS				
Christopher Ohen	Compostela (Spa)	27	1	0
Jonathan Akpoborie	VfB Stuttgart (Ger)	29	8	2
Tijani Babangida	Ajax Amsterdam (Hol)	24	4	0
Daniel Amokachi	Besiktas (Tur)	25	43	14
Emmanuel Amunike	Barcelona (Spa)	27	25	8
Victor Ikpeba	Monaco (Fra)	25	15	1
Nwankwo Kanu	Internazionale (Ita)	21	7	1
Rachidi Yekini	FC Zurich (Swi)	34	63	41

THE VIEW FROM NIGERIA

SHAIBU AMIDU, former Nigeria national team coach

"I believe that with Bora Milutinovic, who has been to three previous World Cups, Nigeria have got a good name with experience at the helm. I think they can safely aim at the quarter-finals. But this depends on how well the preparation has gone and whether the players are focused on the tournament. We don't need to have any of these past problems with money and other off-field matters.

"Strengths? Attack! That has always been Nigeria's game. There are great players like Daniel Amokachi leading the front-line. Weaknesses? The team has to beware that it doesn't lose concentration, particularly in defence."

One to watch…extrovert goalkeeper Jose Luis Chilavert will be one of the World Cup's most colourful characters

The hard work starts here

A good record will not be enough when the real action kicks off

PARAGUAY qualified for the World Cup finals easily enough, as runners-up in the South American qualifying tournament, but that does not make them one of the better teams among the 32 in France.

There is no doubt that under Brazilian coach Paulo Cesar Carpegiani – recruited shortly before the start of their qualifying campaign – they have become a better team, with better ball-play, teamwork and confidence, but in a far from easy group, against Spain, Bulgaria and Nigeria, they are likely to have difficulty reaching the second round.

Most of their players are with foreign clubs, nearly all of them in South and Central America, so they do not have much experience of European soccer. This showed up in their only European match (at press time) this year, when Italy beat them 3-1 in Parma. They had further games scheduled against Holland, Romania and Belgium before going to France.

Paraguay's outstanding players are goalkeeper and captain Jose Luis Chilavert, defenders Carlos Gamarra and Celso Ayala, and midfielder Roberto Acuna, who all play abroad.

Although Acuna is a tremendously hard worker, midfield is Paraguay's main problem. Players who can hold the ball and place precision passes are needed. In desperation, Carpegiani wanted to call up Julio Cesar 'Romerito' Romero, a veteran international, to add some experience in the middle, but although he still plays in the First Division, he is almost 38.

Chilavert, for one, immediately objected to his selection because of his age. "If Romero goes to the World Cup, I don't go," said Chilavert, and that seemed to be the end of that.

Chilavert is of tremendous value to the team. He is one of the world's best goalkeepers, has scored with penalties and free-kicks, and is a real inspiration. He is convinced Paraguay will get through what he calls the most difficult group and go far in the World Cup.

Apart from having saved numerous penalties, his strong and accurate kicks upfield start many attacks. He was suspended for four games during qualifying, and Paraguay lost three of them.

The other problem is up front. The in-form striker Jose Cardoso, who plays for Toluca, is Mexico's top League scorer, but the Paraguayan FA threatened to suspend him when he made himself unavailable for the 2-2 draw with the United States, and he has not been picked since. Another striker, Jorge Campos, who plays in China, also did not answer a call-up, while injury may keep out Chile-based Richard Baez.

This leaves Miguel Benitez, leading scorer in qualifying games, Aristides Rojas and Francisco Esteche, who show up well in South American club games, but are hardly world class.

Goals look like they will be hard to come by – a 4-0 win over Poland at the start of the year should be largely ignored as it was played in the mid-summer heat of Asuncion – and it may be that the best Carpegiani can hope for is an exercise in damage limitation.

Eric Weil

HOW THEY QUALIFIED

SOUTH AMERICAN SECTION

24.04.96.....Colombia-Paraguay.....1-0
02.06.96.....Uruguay-Paraguay.....0-2
01.09.96.....Argentina-Paraguay.....1-1
09.10.96.....Paraguay-Chile.....2-1
10.11.96.....Paraguay-Ecuador.....1-0
15.12.96.....Bolivia-Paraguay.....0-0
12.01.97.....Venezuela-Paraguay.....0-2
12.02.97.....Paraguay-Peru.....2-1
02.04.97.....Paraguay-Colombia.....2-1
30.04.97.....Paraguay-Uruguay.....3-1
06.07.97.....Paraguay-Argentina.....1-2
20.07.97.....Chile-Paraguay.....2-1
20.08.97.....Ecuador-Paraguay.....2-1
10.09.97.....Paraguay-Bolivia.....2-1
12.10.97.....Paraguay-Venezuela.....1-0
16.11.97.....Peru-Paraguay.....1-0

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Argentina	16	8	6	2	23	13	30
***Paraguay**	**16**	**9**	**2**	**5**	**21**	**14**	**29**
Colombia	16	8	4	4	23	15	28
Chile	16	7	4	5	32	18	25
Peru	16	7	4	5	19	20	25
Ecuador	16	6	3	7	22	21	21
Uruguay	16	6	3	7	18	21	21
Bolivia	16	4	5	7	18	21	17
Venezuela	16	0	3	13	8	41	3

*Paraguay qualify for finals

FRANCE 98 SCHEDULE
June 12, v Bulgaria, Montpellier
June 19, v Spain, Saint-Etienne
June 24, v Nigeria, Toulouse

QUESTIONS TO THE COACH

'We may surprise a few people'

Paulo Cesar Carpegiani

● ***How do you rate Paraguay's World Cup chances?***
We know it will not be easy and that we face three tough games in the first round. Spain, Nigeria and Bulgaria are all strong sides and perhaps it is the hardest group of all. But we will be trying our hardest to reach the second stage.

● ***How has the team changed since you became national coach?***
When I took over in 1996 this team did not exist. Now I think we are one of the most difficult teams to beat in South America. I like to think I have been able to give the players a sense of continuity and a tactical shape which suits the balance of talent we have – such as having many talented defenders available but not so many talented midfielders.

● ***You have not been afraid of throwing young players into the fray…***
We have lots of very good young players – for example, our striker Hugo Ovelar has made enormous progress.

● ***How do you feel, as a Brazilian, about taking Paraguay to France?***
Because we did well during the qualifying campaign I could have gone back to Brazil – I had offers from several big clubs. But I wanted to see this job through with Paraguay, as far as it goes. So that means the first round of the World Cup. After that…we'll see.

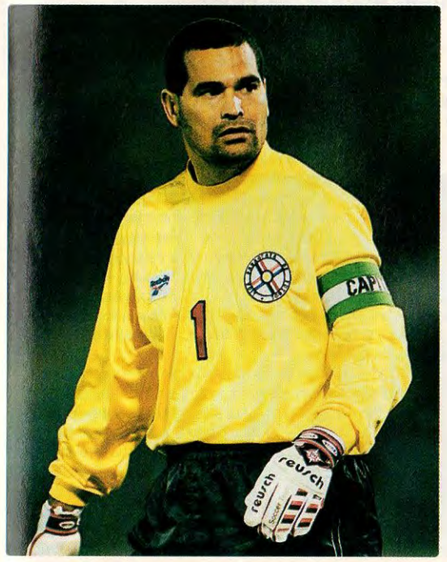
● ***Who are your key players?***
I know we do not have many players who are household names around the world, but we may surprise a few people. Chilavert is a very important player for us, both for his own abilities and for the optimism and enthusiasm that he brings to the squad.

Interview: John Holmesdale

Players to watch

JOSE LUIS CHILAVERT
Paraguay's Mr Motivator, Chilavert is an inspiring presence behind his team and an intimidating figure to opposing attackers. He is also a specialist at taking penalties and free-kicks and is the goalkeeper most likely to win the tournament's Golden Boot!

ROBERTO ACUNA >>
An attacking midfielder, Acuna is a key performer for the side and one of the first names on Carpegiani's teamsheet. His nickname, 'El Toro' (the Bull) – earned because of his fighting spirit – is now particularly appropriate since he plays his club football in Spain.



HOW THEY LINE UP

Sarabia is a strong option for Carpegiani in a powerful central defence, and the versatile Arce can play as a wing-back in a 3-4-3 line-up or at right-back in a flat back four. Struway is also a versatile player who could feature in a defensive role. Enciso is a ball-winning midfielder with Morales Santos, Bourdier and key man Acuna pushing forward. Alcaraz and Sotelo are potential replacements in midfield. Aristides Rojas will be challenging for a starting place up front, with Esteche another alternative.

NAME	CLUB	AGE	CAPS	GLS
GOALKEEPERS				
Jose Luis Chilavert	Velez Sarsfield (Arg)	32	36	4
Ruben Ruiz Diaz	Monterrey (Mex)	28	13	0
Danilo Aceval	Union Santa Fe (Arg)	22	3	0
DEFENDERS				
Francisco Arce	Palmeiras (Bra)	27	29	5
Celso Ayala	River Plate (Arg)	27	41	2
Carlos Gamarra	Corinthians (Bra)	27	46	3
Juan Carlos Villamayor	Atletico Celaya (Mex)	29	11	0
Catalino Rivarola	Gremio (Bra)	33	48	4
Juan Ramon Jara	Rosario Central (Arg)	27	18	0
Arnaldo Espinola	Internacional (Bra)	22	3	0
Ricardo Rojas	Estudiantes (Arg)	27	6	0
Pedro Sarabia	River Plate (Arg)	22	18	0
Estanislao Struway	Portuguesa (Bra)	29	18	0
MIDFIELDERS				
Roberto Acuna	Real Zaragoza (Spa)	26	43	3
Jorge Alcaraz	Cerro Porteno	29	12	0
Harles Bourdier	Union Santa Fe (Arg)	25	12	0
Gustavo Sotelo	Guarani	30	13	0
Julio Cesar Enciso	Internacional (Bra)	23	26	2
Carlos Morales Santos	Gim. y Esgrima (Arg)	29	7	0
FORWARDS				
Jose Cardoso	Toluca (Mex)	27	13	3
Aristides Rojas	Union Santa Fe (Arg)	26	31	6
Miguel Angel Benitez	Espanyol (Spa)	28	31	9
Francisco Esteche	Olimpia	24	19	4
Hugo Ovelar	Guarani	26	3	0

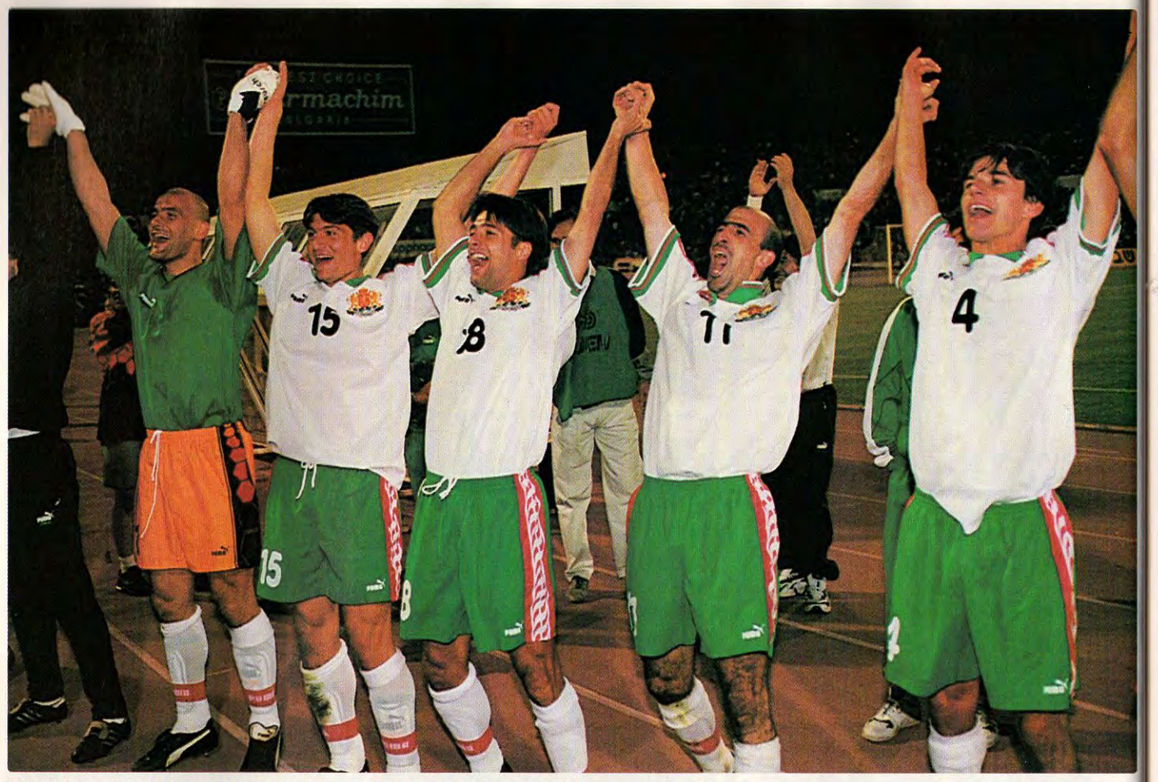
THE VIEW FROM PARAGUAY

ALEJANDRO GARCIA, Tempo

"What matters most is what mood Chilavert is in. The key moment in the qualifying competition was a year before it even started when he decided he would, after all, play for the national team again.

"The strength of Paraguay is Chilavert himself because his presence – apart, of course, from his goals – means so much psychologically. The weakness of Paraguay is the fragile morale of the rest of the team.

"Paraguay play regularly in the World Cup and Copa America but many of the players have very little idea of what it's like to play in a big, intense tournament like the World Cup finals. I'm a little afraid that, by the time they have adjusted, it will be all over for them."



Happier days...Bonev's men celebrate qualification for France, but hopes are not high

HOW THEY QUALIFIED

EUROPEAN SECTION, GROUP 5

01.09.96	Israel-Bulgaria	2-1
08.10.96	Luxembourg-Bulgaria	1-2
14.12.96	Cyprus-Bulgaria	1-3
02.04.97	Bulgaria-Cyprus	4-2
08.06.97	Bulgaria-Luxembourg	4-0
20.08.97	Bulgaria-Israel	1-0
10.09.97	Bulgaria-Russia	1-0
11.10.97	Russia-Bulgaria	4-2

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
***Bulgaria**	**8**	**6**	**0**	**2**	**18**	**9**	**18**
Russia	8	5	2	1	19	5	17
Israel	8	4	1	3	9	7	13
Cyprus	8	3	1	4	10	15	10
Luxembourg	8	0	0	8	2	22	0

*Bulgaria qualify as group winners

A flat finale

Few expect the Bulgarians to repeat the glories of 94

ACCORDING to the coach Hristo Bonev, who took over in odd circumstances after Euro 96, Group D is the toughest in Round One. It is very likely that this will prove to be the case for a veteran team whose old stagers will not want to give way to the "youngsters" in the squad, and they are mostly in their mid-twenties!

Bonev has to contend with player power, as Dimitar Penev, his predecessor also had. He had a revolt to quell as soon as the qualifying competition began, with Stoichkov as its leader. Player and coach reportedly have buried the hatchet but the Great Man's recent departure for petrodollars in the desert and the Asian Cup-winners Cup cannot have helped preparations.

Stocihkov's return from an unhappy spell at Barcelona seemed to be the answer. Instead of Spanish 'B' football, it was thought he would appear regularly for CSKA, help them to the Championship, and gain match practice at first-team level. It was not to be, but Stoichkov doubtless insists on going to France.

This situation may not help team spirit and Bonev might also have his problems with former captain and regular goalkeeper Mikhailov, a man with a string of injuries behind him and until 18 months ago the 'Club Bulgaria' shop steward. He has been displaced by Zdravkov and did not make an appearance in the eight qualifying games, but will not wish to miss out on the final fling of his generation.

In defence, Petkov, of champions Liteks Lovech, looks assured of a place, having established himself this year. Bonev appears determined to stick with Ivanov, now back home, and it may be Iordanov whose place will be in doubt if Zafirov's late bid succeeds.

In midfield, some ancient legs look a bit beyond what will be needed. Beating Paraguay in Montpellier while still fresh may be the key. Whether such a win may suffice is far from sure.

There looks little chance of beating Spain, Europe's most stable side, and Nigeria's draw with Germany in Cologne looks ominous. The West Africans will match the legs of Stoichkov & Co...in which case Bulgaria could go into the last game with a probably tired Kostadinov having to weave his magic against Hierro and Iordanov stretching to hold Raul.

The alternatives to the standard Kostadinov-Penev-Stoichkov attacking line look rather out of international top class. Iliev and Gruev did not look the part against Morocco in Sofia. So it will have to be the old masters, but who will win the ball for them is difficult to know.

Borimov might be the answer in one of the midfield spots, and Yankov may be required to do the work of two, but he is not the youngest and his usual duties are more defensive than creative. With Balakov unpredictable, and concerned about his future (or lack of it) at Stuttgart, Bonev really has problems in the middle of the park. And Lechkov is unlikely to be there; he was omitted from the warm-up squad after walking out on Besiktas.

An era may end with an embarrassing fourth place and an early flight home.

Bob Vaughan

FRANCE 98 SCHEDULE

June 12
v Paraguay, M'pellier
June 19
v Nigeria, Paris
June 24
v Spain, Lens

QUESTIONS TO THE COACH

'It is not realistic to talk about finishing fourth again'

Hristo Bonev

● ***What would you rate a good World Cup for your team?***
To play good football, cause some surprises, and show fair play. Our group is the strongest, the most difficult, with equal possibilities for each team to qualify. I am, however, convinced that if we win against Paraguay we shall qualify for the next phase. However it is not realistic to talk about finishing fourth again.

● ***Who do you think will win in the tournament?***
Brazil, Argentina or England.

● ***Will there be a surprise country?***
The United States could be a surprise country.

● ***Who will be your star players?***
The goalkeeper, libero, stopper, playmaker and centre-forward, respectively Zdravko Zdravkov, Trifon Ivanov, Krassimir Balakov, Hristo Stoichkov, Luboslav Penev. We have a generation of great players who will be playing in their last major tournament.

● ***Do you think we will see any tactical or technical innovations at France 98?***
That's difficult to say...but I do not think that we should really expect anything revolutionary now.

● ***Will your team be based on the veterans of the last World Cup and European Championship?***
Our team will be based on the experience and the mastery of the veterans and the enthusiasm of the young players. But it is true that the heart of the team will be the players who performed so well in 1994. A decisive factor in our strategy is the self-confidence gained from success in the United States.

● ***How will you approach the group matches?***
Our opponents' strengths will dictate the style of play, but in recent years we have become used to a more attacking style, which both our fans and players like.

● ***Is it true you would prefer to pick foreign based players rather than those playing in Bulgaria?***
I am always being asked whether I prefer to use our foreign based players, but I have no favourites. I rely on every Bulgarian – whether he plays at home or abroad. If he is good enough for the job then he will be with us in France. That's all that matters.

● ***Are you optimistic about the young players coming through the ranks?***
Not really. I am looking at possible young players but time is short and results cannot be achieved in a day.

● ***Why is that?***
The Bulgarian Championship has for years been of an unenviable standard and when we play at international level you can see that we have fallen behind the rest of the world.

● ***Are you worried that your star man Hristo Stoichkov is not in the best form?***
No. Hristo should not feel uneasy because even in this condition he has shown he is still a world-class footballer.

● ***Will you recall Yordan Lechkov [without a club since walking out on Turkish club Besiktas] for the finals squad?***
I stick by what I said when he was omitted. If he is not playing anywhere, what's the point of including him in the team?

● ***Who would you prefer to play in the Final?***
I do not have any preferences. Let's just reach the Final first!

Interview: Bob Vaughan

HOW THEY LINE UP

The veterans still pull the strings. Stoichkov, Kostadinov and Balakov provide the attacking ammunition for big, burly Penev up front. Yankov, Borimirov and Balakov provide the legs in midfield. In defence, Trifon Ivanov, despite his recent problems with the coach, is the mainstay but Ivailo Petkov is a recent, welcome addition. Some youngsters are waiting in the wings – Hristov, Bachev And Todorov – but few are likely to make an impact in France.

NAME	CLUB	AGE	CAPS	GLS
GOALKEEPERS				
Zdravko Zdravkov	Istanbulspor (Tur)	27	14	0
Borislav Mihailov	Slavia Sofia	36	101	0
Radostin Stanev	CSKA Sofia	22	0	0
DEFENDERS				
Radostin Kishishev	Liteks Lovech	23	19	0
Petar Hubchev	Eintracht Frankfurt (Ger)	34	36	0
Trifon Ivanov	CSKA Sofia	32	72	6
Gosho Ginchev	Antalyaspor (Tur)	29	14	0
Adalbert Zafirov	Arminia Bielefeld (Ger)	29	6	0
Ivailo Petkov	Liteks Lovech	22	7	0
Ivailo Yordanov	Sporting Lisbon (Por)	32	29	1
MIDFIELDERS				
Zlatko Yankov	Besiktas (Tur)	32	64	4
Krassimir Balakov	VfB Stuttgart (Ger)	32	65	12
Anatoli Nankov	Lokomotiv Sofia	28	11	0
Daniel Borimirov	1860 Munich (Ger)	28	36	4
Georgi Bachev	Slavia Sofia	21	2	0
Ilian Iliev	Bursaspor (Tur)	29	14	1
Ilia Gruev	Neftochimik Bourgas	28	2	0
Marian Hristov	Kaiserslautern (Ger)	24	10	2
Stoicho Stoilov	Liteks Lovech	23	2	1
Kostadin Vidolov	Bursaspor (Tur)	28	8	1
FORWARDS				
Hristo Stoichkov	CSKA Sofia	32	70	35
Emil Kostadinov	CSKA Sofia	30	66	25
Luboslav Penev	Compostela (Spa)	31	59	13
Svetoslav Todorov	Liteks Lovech	19	2	0

Players to watch

HRISTO STOICHKOV>> Still the star man after all these years. Now playing his club football back in Bulgaria, via a two-match payday in Saudi Arabia, but is he ready for one final fling on the world stage?

IVAILO PETKOV>> Left-back and one of the stars of Liteks' surprise title win. Bound to attract attention from Western European scouts.

THE VIEW FROM BULGARIA

RUMEN PAYTSCHEV, journalist

"The strength of Bulgaria is that the players all know each other, have played club and international football together, and have been in the team for previous competitions. There are world-class players among them. Nobody needs to be reminded about the successes in America.

"On a good day Stoichkov is capable of anything. Likewise Kostadinov and Lechkov. The team will not panic if initially things do not go well.

"The problems include the age and lack of match practice some such as Stoichkov, Lechkov and Ivanov have had during the season. There are few new stars on the horizon. There may be threats to the coach's authority despite his experience on the bench and his having played 96 times for Bulgaria. Stoichkov may want to run the show and play when he is no longer up to it.

"The newly-established defender Petkov could be a star western clubs will chase; otherwise the players are well known abroad. Hristov is one of the relatively younger element who could come to prominence."

Dutch courage...the USA's Kasey Keller saves this time from Ronald De Boer, but can't save the match. Holland won

Dutch put their house in order

Hiddink's rejuvenated squad at last on the right track

DUTCH COACH Guus Hiddink had his World Cup schedule mapped out long ago and he has stuck to it. Now, with everybody vowing to pull together instead of getting involved in the in-fighting which has made the headlines of recent tournaments rather than their play, things are looking brighter than they have for some time.

With luck, and with Dennis Bergkamp and Patrick Kluivert back to full fitness, Holland could have a memorable month.

Hiddink's recall of midfielder Edgar Davids has won him widespread praise. Most fans believe the coach was right to send Davids home from Euro 96, after his outspoken criticism of others involved with the team. Now they appreciate that the manager has been big enough to forgive, if not to forget.

Davids, who broke a leg during his spell at Milan and was unpopular with his team-mates, has more than regained his old form since moving to Juventus late last year. The player known as Pit bull should provide some of the physical force Holland have sometimes lacked.

"It's a matter of quality," says Hiddink. "Davids has it and that's why he's back. But there's no guarantee he'll start a game. All my players have to appreciate that nobody's a certainty."

Unlike many national coaches, Hiddink is not in favour of holing up his players in training camps or playing insignificant matches against weakened opponents. He arranged only five games after qualifying for France, and one of them was almost called off because politicians took exception to playing against Nigeria, a country boycotted by the European Union.

Hiddink had his probable first team sorted out as early as February after a convincing 2-0 defeat of the USA and, more fortunately, a 3-2 victory over Mexico – after being three up at half-time – in Miami.

Two possible inclusions to the squad did themselves no favours on the trip. Michael Mols, deputising for Bergkamp who refused to fly to the States, found that international football is a lot different from playing for Utrecht in Holland's relegation zone. And full-back Ernest Faber of PSV had a disastrous debut against Mexico, conceding a penalty. So the uncapped Jimmy Floyd Hasselbaink of Leeds United and Boudewijn Zenden of PSV, who has made only three appearances, are in the squad as cover for the strikers, and Ferdi Vierklau of Tenerife gets the nod in defence.

Michael Reiziger has not had one of his better seasons since leaving Milan for Barcelona. He has struggled to find his form and the club's Dutch coach, Louis Van Gaal, has often left him out of the team, but Hiddink has kept faith with him.

There are four other England-based players in the squad, besides Bergkamp and Hasselbaink: Chelsea goalkeeper Ed De Goey, Arsenal winger Marc Overmars, Nottingham Forest striker Pierre Van Hooijdonk and Jaap Stam, who became the world's costliest defender when he joined Manchester United from PSV.

Things can only get better for the Orange Machine – provided all remains calm.

Klaas-Jan Droppert

HOW THEY QUALIFIED

EUROPEAN SECTION, GROUP 7

05.10.96.....Wales-Holland.....1-3
09.11.96.....Holland-Wales.....7-1
14.12.96.....Belgium-Holland.....0-3
29.03.97..... Holland-San Marino.....4-0
02.04.97.....Turkey-Holland.....1-0
30.04.97.....San Marino-Holland.....0-6
06.09.97.....Holland-Belgium 3-1
11.10.97.....Holland-Turkey.....0-0

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
***Holland**	**8**	**6**	**1**	**1**	**26**	**4**	**19**
Belgium	8	6	0	2	20	11	18
Turkey	8	4	2	2	21	9	14
Wales	8	2	1	5	20	21	7
San Marino	8	0	0	8	0	42	0

*Holland qualify for finals

FRANCE 98 SCHEDULE
June 13,
v Belgium, Saint-Denis
June 20,
v South Korea, Marseille
June 25,
v Mexico, Saint-Etienne

QUESTIONS TO THE COACH

'This time, the team will be putting football first'

Guus Hiddink

● ***Will the team be concentrating on football in France rather than money or other problems, which often afflict the Dutch squad?***
After Euro 96 was over, I insisted that everything which had nothing to do with football directly should be organised. There can be no place for disruptive elements, and I have asked the players to leave their commercial activities in good hands. They have done that, and they tell me that money will hardly mean anything to them during the tournament. They just want to play football as well as they can and I'm very pleased about that.

● ***What target have you set the team?***
Our main target is to get as far as possible. I know it's a cliché, but the players and I have the urge to show the world what Holland's players are capable of.

● ***Who are your favourites to win the trophy?***
France, because they are playing at home – history shows this is an advantage. Brazil, because they have the best team. Remember their friendly against Germany? Beating the Germans at home was impressive. Spain, because they have a lot of promising, talented players who can give just that little bit extra to a team. And Germany, because they always improve during a tournament, even if they are not at their best.

● ***Who will be the stars and surprises?***
Nigeria or one of the other African countries could be the surprise of the tournament and it's obvious that Ronaldo will be the star individual. Roberto Carlos can be a sensation, too, because of his swerving free-kicks.

● ***Who are your key players?***
We have several important players who will be expected to perform within our system. The system is obvious, but who is going to play in which position is still an open question. That's why I'm glad of all the time I've had beforehand.

● ***What technical or tactical developments can we expect to see?***
I expect the type of play shown during Le Tournoi in France last year, by England, France and Brazil. That means fast, and very demanding physically. Teams that can't cope won't stand a chance.

● ***How will the size and structure – games at three venues – of the finals affect your preparations?***
They'll make a difference. We waited until the draw before choosing a hotel, at Menton, near Monaco. We prefer a permanent base and this means we'll have to travel a lot, but we won't have to move and adapt to a new environment so often.

● ***How do your rate your group opponents?***
The South Koreans are a tough team with technical players who never give up. We played Mexico in a friendly in February and they started with a reserve squad, then brought on some veteran players and became dangerous. They have a lot of World Cup experience. Belgium are old rivals and have no secrets from us, just as we have no secrets from them. They beat us in USA 94. It's time to even the score.

● ***And Edgar Davids' inclusion in the squad...***
Any player in form and performing at the highest level in Europe every week will be a candidate for the national team. That holds good for Davids as well.

● ***Can Patrick Kluivert hope to do well after an exhausting season and the accusation of rape?***
He has shown at Milan that he is on the right course. He is of great importance to the team, and if he is fit he has the ability to have a great tournament.

Interview: Klaas-Jan Droppert

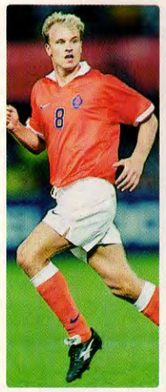
HOW THEY LINE UP

The only real doubt in Holland's defence is at left-back. Bogarde is regarded as a better marker than Numan, but Numan's attacking verve could earn him a selection. Jonk plays a holding role in front of the defence allowing Ronald De Boer and Cocu, or possibly Davids, to push forward. Seedorf is likely to play behind the two strikers, one of whom will be Bergkamp. Kluivert could well be the other, with Van Hooijdonk or Hasselbaink in reserve. In another scenario, Cocu or Davids could play deeper, with Zenden (right) and Overmars (left) as attacking wide men. The versatile Winter is also likely to feature at some stage on the left side.

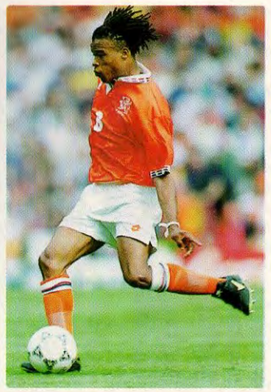
NAME	CLUB	AGE	CAPS	GLS
GOALKEEPERS				
Edwin Van der Sar	Ajax Amsterdam	27	22	0
Ed De Goey	Chelsea (Eng)	31	30	0
Ruud Hesp	Barcelona (Spa)	32	0	0
DEFENDERS				
Frank De Boer	Ajax Amsterdam	28	52	5
Michael Reiziger	Barcelona (Spa)	25	24	0
Jaap Stam	Manchester Utd (Eng)	25	11	1
Arthur Numan	PSV Eindhoven	28	26	0
Winston Bogarde	Barcelona (Spa)	27	12	0
Ferdi Vierklau	Tenerife (Spa)	19	2	0
MIDFIELDERS				
Giovanni Van Bronckhorst	Feyenoord	23	8	1
Phillip Cocu	PSV Eindhoven	27	17	2
Aron Winter	Internazionale (Ita)	31	69	2
Ronald De Boer	Ajax Amsterdam	28	38	10
Wim Jonk	PSV Eindhoven	31	37	11
Clarence Seedorf	Real Madrid (Spa)	22	28	7
Edgar Davids	Juventus (Ita)	25	9	0
FORWARDS				
Dennis Bergkamp	Arsenal (Eng)	29	57	33
Pierre Van Hooijdonk	Nottm Forest (Eng)	28	11	4
Boudewijn Zenden	PSV Eindhoven	21	3	0
Marc Overmars	Arsenal (Eng)	25	37	6
Patrick Kluivert	Milan (Ita)	21	17	8
Jimmy Floyd Hasselbaink	Leeds Utd (Eng)	26	0	0

Players to watch

DENNIS BERGKAMP>> Inspirational for English champions Arsenal this season and should be the same for Holland.



EDGAR DAVIDS>> Recently recalled to the side, there is no one better than the Juve midfielder when he's on form.



THE VIEW FROM HOLLAND

HANS KRAAIJ, ex-international and coach, now a TV commentator and analyst

"With Dennis Bergkamp and Edwin Van der Sar, Holland have two world-class players. Van der Sar is by far the best goalkeeper in the world – Vitor Baia and Peter Schmeichel have declined, David Seaman and Taffarel shouldn't be compared with him. The inclusion of Davids will definitely strengthen the team – everyone needs a player like him.

"Holland have a unique technical staff: Neeskens, Koeman and Rijkaard, ex-players who know how it works at international level. However, we often find it difficult to act as a team. I never want to hear terms like 'cable' again (meaning the bond between players of Surinamese origin which undermined the team spirit at Euro 96). Team rules should be clear and if you don't want to obey them, then stay at home. Only then can we achieve good results.

"I have been watching a lot of internationals lately and I rate our players very highly. In fact, higher than almost any other country. If you don't perform well in the World Cup, lack of quality can never be the reason. Holland have a real chance to go a long way, but you also need a little bit of luck to become world champions."

Saving scheme...Filip De Wilde is the likely first-choice goalkeeper

Peace deal eases worries

Scifo's return to the fold raises hopes...just a little bit

THE MOST revealing aspect of Georges Leekens is the colour of his hair – still jet black, at 49, an age when most of his contemporaries are greying or fraying at the edges. Belgium's national coach still sports a thick dark thatch which has nothing to do with his country's equivalent of Grecian 2000.

Yet Leekens has as many if not more worries than most of his World Cup rivals. Chief among them, until recently, was the availability of his star performer, Enzo Scifo. Until the Anderlecht midfielder phoned Leekens and apparently buried the hatchet, the two had been at loggerheads, Scifo doing his utmost to rule himself out of the World Cup.

Leekens, loathe to let any player believe that he is bigger than the team, had not included Scifo for the game against the USA in February, primarily because he wanted to experiment with other players. Scifo got the hump in a big way, was discarded completely for the match against Norway a month later, and was again omitted when Romania went to Brussels in April.

Belgium had won the first game and drawn the other two. They could, it seemed, tolerate Scifo's absence. Then the player belatedly came to his senses and made his peace.

Scifo, apparently, had been infuriated by the fact that Leekens had not got in touch to tell him what was happening. "He's a nice guy, a good player and I respect what he has done for the national team but the rules are that I never telephone any player to tell him if he is not playing," explained the coach. "If I did that I would never be off the phone.

"I have the responsibility for 30 players. They have to accept that. Other players such as Wilmots and De Roover did, but Scifo took a very emotional decision. I treated him like any other player."

Belgium certainly can do with Scifo's artistry in midfield, for there was no evidence of an abundance of flair in that department during the three friendlies mentioned above.

All were played in Stade Roi Baudoin which, in its seemingly permanent state of renovation, is hardly a hotbed of passion. Yet it was there, against the States, that Nico Van Kerckhoven of Lierse summoned up the inspiration to shoot his first two international goals. He was then a striker, playing wide on the left, but found himself in the back four against Norway.

Leekens must decide not only on the player's best position but the most watertight formation in defence. Does he opt for the flat back four, which he deployed in the 2-2 draw with Norway? In that game there seemed to be a distinct lack of rapport between Glen De Boeck and Eric Van Meir, who can be such a powerhouse striding forward for Lierse. Or should he select a sweeper such as Gordan Vidovic of Mouscron?

There appear to be no such dilemmas up front, where the whole of Belgium seems unanimous. The most profitable partnership must be that between Luis Oliveira and Luc Nilis which did so much to take the Red Devils to France. Two foreign mercenaries, they have struck up an impressive rapport.

Oliveira, who came to international fame with a hat-trick during the qualifiers in the vital 3-1 win in Turkey, has exceptional pace and dexterity. When he is on the same wavelength as Nilis, whose opportunism brought a glorious equaliser in the 1-1 draw with Romania, Belgium benefit, especially if Marc Wilmots is in close support. With deputies of the calibre of Gert Verheyen and the Mpenzas, Belgium are certainly not lacking options in attack.

Whether those forwards will have a service to thrive on is another matter entirely.

Nicholas Harling

HOW THEY QUALIFIED

EUROPEAN SECTION, GROUP 7

31.08.96.....Belgium-Turkey 2-1
09.10.96.....San Marino-Belgium.....0-3
14.12.96.....Belgium-Holland.....0-3
29.03.97.....Wales-Belgium 1-2
30.04.97.....Turkey-Belgium 1-3
07.06.97.....Belgium-San Marino 6-0
06.09.97.....Holland-Belgium 3-1
11.10.97.....Belgium-Wales 3-2

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Holland	8	6	1	1	26	4	19
***Belgium**	**8**	**6**	**0**	**2**	**20**	**11**	**18**
Turkey	8	4	2	2	21	9	14
Wales	8	2	1	5	20	21	7
San Marino	8	0	0	8	0	42	0

*Belgium enter play-offs

PLAY-OFFS

29.10.97.....Rep Ireland-Belgium 1-1
15.11.97.....Belgium-Rep Ireland 2-1
Belgium win 3-2 on agg and qualify for finals

FRANCE 98 SCHEDULE

June 13, v Holland, Saint-Denis
June 20, v Mexico, Bordeaux
June 25, v South Korea, Paris

QUESTIONS TO THE COACH

'Our midfielders have to adapt to the quality up front'

Georges Leekens

● ***What are Belgium's chances in France?***
Other teams are better than us. They are bigger. They have more talent. I would love to win the World Cup. I don't think we will but we will try to do our best, to give the maximum. It's not in the nature of Belgians to start talking big. We know we are in the World Cup only because we beat the Republic of Ireland in the play-offs. Our ambition is to get through to the second round, but that will be a hell of a job.

● ***How do you rate your group opponents?***
Holland are very strong, stronger than us – there is no shame in not being the best in our group. But our mission is to get through; that is why our second game against Mexico is more important than the Holland match. We need to beat Mexico and then South Korea. Mexico won the Gold Cup. They must be a good team. If they are allowed to play at the same rhythm as us they will be better than us. They could be a big surprise. South Korea are very aggressive, mobile and they have a good physique.

● ***What is the feeling among the players?***
When I first came it was a very negative atmosphere. There was a bad mentality, bad press, bad public, everything was bad. I couldn't do anything with such an ambience so I tried to speak to the players positively. What we now have is a family atmosphere. Everyone wants to come and play for Belgium. We know we have to play as a team because our opponents will have more quality than us. So we must have a good condition, good preparation and good mentality.

● ***What are Belgium's particular strengths?***
Our quality is offensive. All our midfielders have to adapt to the quality up front. Everyone realises they are not there to put on a show but to make sure we function in attack.

● ***Why did you take the job of national coach?***
In 18 months I had taken Mouscron from the Second Division to four points clear in the championship. Then Belgium came in for me. When I left Mouscron they were safe with a good structure. Otherwise I wouldn't have been able to leave them, but it was the start of a big adventure. This is a marvellous, important job, important because you can't please everyone.

● ***Who are your key players?***
Franky Van der Elst has a good mentality. I worked with him at Brugge. We needed an older player with a good mentality. He knows me and I knew the national team needed him. It was a risk for Franky at his age. I knew it could finish him off but he was thinking more of the team than himself. I will have to change players like Franky, Staelens and Scifo after the World Cup because they will be too old. But Marc Wilmots is not. He is such a worker, a tank, one of our key players. So is Van Kerckhoven. And then there are Oliveira and Nilis in attack. They blend so well.

● ***Who will be the stars of the tournament?***
Ronaldo and Romario, because of the way they work together. Brazil must be the favourites. But I think England will do well, and France. Germany are always close to winning and I can see Norway doing well. Maybe even Holland. They are a very good team. The only problem is themselves.

● ***What technical developments should we expect in France***
I don't think there will be anything new. Maybe Norway will show how good they are at playing with one striker and using the long ball on the counter-attack. Most of the teams will be well organised so goals will come from little things like deflections.

Interview: Nicholas Harling

HOW THEY LINE UP

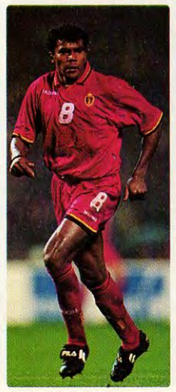
Leekens could well play a 4-2-2-2 formation, though he may employ Vidovic as a sweeper. Crasson, Van Meir, De Boeck and Borkelmans are the likely understudies for the back four slots. Van Kerckhoven and Van Der Elst should take the holding midfield roles, with Verstraeten, Clement and Claessens as possible back-ups. Boffin takes a right-sided role with Wilmots playing in behind the front two. If Scifo appears, it could be as sub for Wilmots. Up front, Leekens has the option of introducing one or both Mpenzas or Goossens.

NAME	CLUB	AGE	CAPS	GLS
GOALKEEPERS				
Filip De Wilde	Anderlecht	33	20	0
Dany Verlinden	Club Brugge	34	1	0
Philippe Van De Walle	Eendracht Aalst	36	2	0
DEFENDERS				
Vital Borkelmans	Club Brugge	35	16	0
Eric Deflandre	Club Brugge	24	4	0
Philippe Leonard	Monaco (Fra)	24	10	0
Lorenzo Staelens	Club Brugge	34	46	6
Gordan Vidovic	Mouscron	29	5	0
Eric Van Meir	Lierse	30	12	1
Glen De Boeck	Anderlecht	26	6	0
Bertrand Crasson	Napoli (Ita)	26	13	1
Mark Verstraeten	Germinal Ekeren	30	4	0
MIDFIELDERS				
Danny Boffin	Metz (Fra)	32	34	0
Franky Van der Elst	Club Brugge	37	80	1
Nico Van Kerckhoven	Lierse	27	14	2
Marc Wilmots	Schalke 04 (Ger)	29	31	10
Philippe Clement	Genk	24	2	0
Gert Claessens	Club Brugge	26	2	1
Enzo Scifo	Anderlecht (Bel)	32	79	1
FORWARDS				
Luis Oliveira	Fiorentina (Ita)	29	24	7
Michael Goossens	Schalke 04 (Ger)	24	10	1
Lokonda Mpenza	Standard Liege	19	7	2
Mbo Mpenza	Standard Liege	21	2	0
Luc Nilis	PSV Eindhoven (Hol)	31	44	9
Gert Verheyen	Club Brugge	27	14	2

Players to watch

FRANKIE VAN DER ELST>> Veteran Club Brugge midfielder who was recalled by Leekens last year. Now plays a crucial holding role in central midfield.

LUIS OLIVEIRA>> Brazil-born, Italy-based striker with great pace and ball skills.



THE VIEW FROM BELGIUM

Maryan Mahieu, football statistician for Belgium's state TV company

"In 1990 and 1994 the Belgian team was much more defensive than it is now. Today, we have a team whose best players, Luc Nilis and Luis Oliveira, are in attack. Defensively, the team is a bit weaker than it used to be, but I still think that we should reach the last 16 without any problem.

"If we get anything from our first game against Holland it will be a bonus. They beat us twice in the qualifying tournament and have more quality, but in the World Cup you never know. After all, we beat them in 1994.

"I think our most important game is the next one, against Mexico. Maybe Mexico will already have three points from their first game and gamble on getting a point against us. A lot will also depend on our next game, against South Korea. They have improved a lot since we beat them in Verona in 1990.

"If we get through to the last 16 and meet Germany we won't have any chance, but if we meet Yugoslavia that is a different matter. Look at Germinal Ekeren. They beat Red Star Belgrade in the Cup-winners Cup."

Backs to the wall...but South Korea will face up to the challenge in France

HOW THEY QUALIFIED

ASIAN SECTION – FIRST ROUND, GROUP 6

23.02.97.....Hong Kong-South Korea.....0-2
02.03.97.....Thailand-South Korea.....1-3
28.05.97.....South Korea-Hong Kong.....4-0
01.06.97.....South Korea-Thailand.....0-0

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
***S Korea**	**4**	**3**	**1**	**0**	**9**	**1**	**10**
Thailand	4	1	1	2	5	6	4
Hong Kong	4	1	0	3	3	10	3

*South Korea qualify for second round

SECOND ROUND, GROUP B

06.09.97.....South Korea-Kazakhstan....3-0
12.09.97.....South Korea-Uzbekistan.....2-1
28.09.97.....Japan-South Korea.....1-2
04.10.97.....South Korea-UAE.....3-0
11.10.97.....Kazakhstan-South Korea....1-1
18.10.97.....Uzbekistan-South Korea.....1-5
01.11.97.....South Korea-Japan.....0-2
09.11.97.....UAE-South Korea.....1-3

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
***S Korea**	**8**	**6**	**1**	**1**	**19**	**7**	**19**
Japan	8	3	4	1	17	9	13
UAE	8	2	3	3	9	12	9
Uzbekistan	8	1	3	4	13	18	6
Kazakhstan	8	1	3	4	7	19	6

*South Korea qualify as group winners

FRANCE 98 SCHEDULE

June 13
v Mexico, Lyon
June 20
v Holland, Marseille
June 25
v Belgium, Paris

Time to prove themselves

Korea are desperate to show that Asian sides can make the grade

CHA BUM-KUN is a different type of World Cup coach. He is the only South Korean among the 32, for one thing: for another, he is concerned with the next global tournament almost as much as with the present one.

South Korea and Japan will share the staging of the 2002 World Cup. It will be the first joint venture and one which has already produced a lot of problems.

Cha almost certainly will not be in the same job four years from now – his place was under some threat after poor results during the recent build-up to France – but he wants to do all he can to help his country make progress on soccer's world stage.

"The 2002 event will be the first World Cup to be staged in Asia, and we are desperate for it to be a success," he says. "In the past, the World Cup has not been notable as far as Asian countries are concerned. There have been very few good results.

"Now, more than on any other previous occasion, we must reach at least the last 16, to save Asian football's face. We have to show that the days when Asian teams qualified for the finals and then failed miserably are now over.

"I want Asian countries to move into the top levels of the world game – with South Korea in the forefront."

Cha did not mention that the few very good results he had referred to included a 1-0 defeat of Italy in 1966 by North Korea, the rival nation on the other side of the 38th parallel. After that solitary appearance, the North Koreans have faded into footballing obscurity even deeper than before, while their southern rivals have made considerable progress.

This World Cup will be South Korea's fifth, but their fourth in succession, which indicates growing strength at a 'parochial' level. Unfortunately, they still have not won a game in a finals tournament, having drawn three and lost eight.

Cha will be hoping his players perform as well as – but progress further than – those coached by his predecessor, Kim Ho, in USA 94. Then they scored twice in the last six minutes to draw with Spain, drew 0-0 with Bolivia, and, having conceded three goals in 35 minutes, scored twice and had Germany holding on in the closing stages.

The Koreans deserved at least another draw, but had to be satisfied with third place in their group, which was not good enough to take them into the next stage. Even so, they returned home to the sort of welcome usually reserved for winners, with President Kim Young-sam among those paying tribute.

Only five of that squad remain, however, for Cha has not been slow to experiment since he took over in 1996, after a 6-2 defeat by Iran in the Asian Cup.

Only three players in a preliminary squad of 32 had passed his 30th birthday, and one – midfielder Ko Jong-su of Suwon Samsung – is only 19.

The outstanding Korean of the recent past, Sangmoo's Choi Yong-soo, scored nine times in eight games during the World Cup qualifying rounds and a lot will depend on him as the Koreans try to break down the experienced Dutch, Belgian and Mexican defences in Group E.

Other nations know more about Korean soccer these days than they did back in 1966, when North Korea took Ayresome Park, Middlesbrough – and the Italians – by storm, then led 3-0 against Portugal at Goodison before becoming the victims of Eusebio, one of the stars of that tournament. So it is hard to see the current crop of South Koreans making much progress, even though coach Cha played in Germany for 10 years and has considerable knowledge of European methods.

Revda Dil-po

QUESTIONS TO THE COACH

'The players have more cohesion than in 1986'

Cha Bum-kun

● ***How do you think South Korea will perform in the World Cup?***
I think people might be surprised by how well we play in France. One important aspect of my coaching style has been to place organisation above individual talent. This helped our team during the qualifiers and if we continue to follow that policy I think we will be able to achieve a good result in the World Cup.

● ***How does the current team compare with the one you played in at the 1986 finals in Mexico?***
The 1986 squad was more experienced and had more technique; the current squad is younger and has more guts. Although the players lack technique compared with 1986, they have more cohesion.

● ***Who are your key men?***
Hong Myung-bo, Yoo Sang-chul and Choi Yong-soo. Hong has great talent and ability. In terms of technique as a sweeper, I think he can be compared with the world's best. He lacks physical strength and is also comparatively old at 29. But I feel very proud he's in our national team.

Yoo has great strength and a great ability to adapt his play to suit the system we are using.

Choi has made great progress and has fulfilled his potential. I expect even more improvement. He's got great power and is a great finisher. The only downside is that he finds it difficult to play as part of the team.

● ***What aspects of training have you been focusing on recently?***
I have been trying to improve our tactics and improve the players' concentration and strength.

● ***You played more than 300 games in the Bundesliga. How has that experience helped your managerial career?***
My time in Germany made me aware of the many differences in training methods and way of life between Germany and Korea. It also made me aware of how our players lacked professionalism. That is why I have been keen for our players to move abroad so they can learn better techniques.

Interview: John Holmesdale

HOW THEY LINE UP

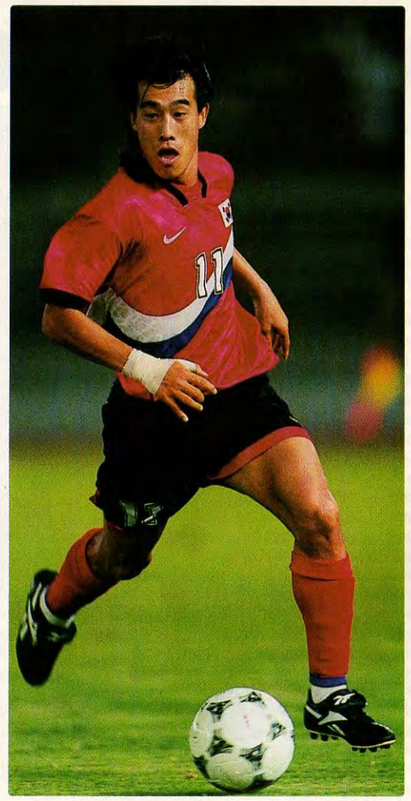
The highly experienced Hong Myung-bo plays sweeper in coach Cha's preferred 3-5-2 system. Choi Young-il and Lee Min-sung are the man-markers, with Yoo Sang-chul in the holding role just in front of them and Lee Ki-hyung and playmaker Ha Seok-ju out wide. Lee Sang-yoon is a likely starter in the centre of midfield, which is completed by Ko Jong-su, Korea's great young hope. Choi Yong-soo is an automatic choice up front with Seo Jung-won likely to pip veteran Hwang Sun-hong for the other striking slot.

NAME	CLUB	AGE	CAPS	GLS
GOALKEEPERS				
Kim Byung-ji	Ulsan Hyundai	28	31	0
Seo Dong-myung	Sangmoo	24	20	0
DEFENDERS				
Choi Young-il	Ulsan Hyundai	32	53	0
Hong Myung-bo	Bellmare Hiratsuka (Jap)	29	92	9
Jang Hyung-seok	Ulsan Hyundai	25	6	1
Lee Ki-hyung	Suwon Samsung	23	36	4
Kim Tae-young	Chunnam Dragons	27	31	3
Lee Min-sung	Ulsan Hyundai	21	27	1
Jang Dae-il	Ilhwa Chunma	23	13	0
Lee Sang-hun	Anyang LG	22	11	0
Kim Hak-chul	Sangmoo	26	1	0
MIDFIELDERS				
Ha Seok-ju	Cerezo Osaka (Jap)	30	79	21
Yoo Sang-chul	Ulsan Hyundai	26	53	9
Yoon Jong-hwan	Puchon SK	25	15	0
Ko Jong-su	Suwon Samsung	19	19	2
Choi Sung-yong	Sangmoo	22	24	0
Lee Sang-yoon	Ilhwa Chunma	29	24	8
Kim Do-keun	Chunnam Dragons	26	9	0
Park Nam-yol	Sangmoo	28	20	0
FORWARDS				
Kim Do-hoon	Vissel Kobe (Jap)	27	36	16
Seo Jung-won	Strasbourg (Fra)	26	72	16
Hwang Sun-hong	Pohang Steelers	29	75	44
Park Kun-ha	Suwon Samsung	26	20	5
Choi Yong-soo	Sangmoo	24	29	15
Ko Jung-woon	Cerezo Osaka (Jap)	31	76	10

Players to watch

HONG MYUNG-BO>> Versatile is the word for sweeper, playmaker or full-back Hong Myung-bo, who plays his club football in Japan with Bellmare Hiratsuka. At 29, he has spent more than a decade among the top men of Korean soccer, and is the most-capped player in the likely squad, with 92.

SEO JUNG-WON>> One of the few Koreans who plays for a European club. Seo, now 26, joined Strasbourg last year. A hard-working attacker, he does not get many goals, but scored a vital one last September – the late equaliser against Japan in Tokyo during the World Cup qualifiers. Then he helped make the last-minute winner.



THE VIEW FROM SOUTH KOREA

P Kim, Daily News

"South Korea's record of one defeat and two draws in the 12 qualifying matches showed traditional South Korean strength in Asia, but they must now measure up to the world. One major aim is to secure our first World Cup finals victory.

"Manager Cha says he wants to get to the last 16 but a victory in the group matches would be a great step forward. It's important for morale because of the Koreans co-hosting the next World Cup.

"After all the economic problems it's also important for the team to give the people something to cheer. It's a matter of pride. That has its positive and negative aspects. We will be expecting a lot of Choi, who scored nine of the 28 goals in the qualifiers."

Firing Blanco...Mexico will be expecting some sharpshooting from the Necaxa striker

Heading for the chop

Only something revolutionary will save Mexico from a painful exit

MANY Mexican fans believe that France, where the guillotine was invented, is a fitting venue for this World Cup. After all, the national team's coach, Manuel Lapuente, has admitted: "I'm the one with his neck on the chopping block."

Lapuente took over late last year when Bora Milutinovic was sacked after a lengthy struggle to hold on to his job.

Qualification from the CONCACAF group is virtually certain every time the World Cup comes round – this will be Mexico's 11th appearance in the finals – but the form the team showed against the minnows of Central America had been so disappointing that Milutinovic was forced out.

At first, Lapuente did well. He was a popular choice, having played for four Mexican clubs in a 14-year career, then coached both Puebla and Necaxa to two national championships. In between he had been in charge of the national team but lost his job after a disastrous foray into the first CONCACAF Gold Cup in 1991.

Mexico won the Gold Cup last December, but their form against weak opposition brought Lapuente more criticism than praise, and the same has happened during the build-up to France 98. They crashed to Brazil and Australia in the Confederations Cup, drew 1-1 at home to Paraguay, lost 5-1 to Universidad Catolica of Chile and 3-1 to Argentina's Boca Juniors, and then 2-1 to Chile's Under-21s.

Even when Lapuente got back on the winning track with a 1-0 defeat of Peru, he came out of it badly. The match was played before a virtually all-Mexican crowd in Los Angeles, and the goal came from a highly suspect penalty.

"We fired Bora and put in Lapuente for this?" was a question posed by Valente Aguirre, president of the Leon club, in a newspaper interview.

Lapuente is a great believer in the value of his youngsters, such as Necaxa stopper Sergio Almaguer, who usually last the pace of a game better than the old 'uns, but his detractors point out that there is no substitute for experience.

In April, Lapuente announced a provisional squad for France – and the balloon went up. No Carlos Hermosillo, Mexican football's all-time leading scorer. No Benjamin Galindo, a popular and widely respected midfielder. Guadalajara, in the basement of the First Division, had six men named. America, another struggling side, had five. The back four that had played in the most recent game, and had been referred to by one writer as "Swiss Cheese", all appeared.

Televisa, the giant Mexican TV company, took some of the criticism, for becoming so powerful that players with clubs that the company does not own are not treated fairly when it comes to international selection. Hermosillo and Galindo play for Cruz Azul, not one of the Televisa cartel.

The line-up changes constantly without much sign of progress, and although there are some genuinely talented youngsters around, they seem unlikely to be able to achieve much in a group containing Holland, Belgium and South Korea. These three will provide tougher opposition than the USA, Jamaica, Costa Rica, El Salvador and Canada, the other teams in the second of Mexico's two qualifying groups. Even so, Mexico won only four of their games against them, and drew six. Those who care to examine the records of that campaign will not be slow to appreciate the fact that Hermosillo and Galindo scored 18 of the 23 goals.

Lapuente says that he needs to test the younger players and knows all he needs to know about the older contenders. That may be, and he may benefit by having all the group games in southern France, where temperatures can soar towards Mexican heights, but unless some new stars appear, Lapuente is likely to be put in a tumbril and sent on his way out of the national job again.

Marcos Arlezir

HOW THEY QUALIFIED

CENTRAL AMERICAN ZONE, GROUP 3

15.09.96	St Vincent-Mexico 0-3
21.09.96	Honduras-Mexico 2-1
16.10.96	Mexico-Jamaica 2-1
30.10.96	Mexico-St Vincent 5-1
06.11.96	Mexico-Honduras 3-1
17.11.96	Jamaica-Mexico 1-0

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Jamaica	6	4	1	1	12	3	13
***Mexico**	**6**	**4**	**0**	**2**	**14**	**6**	**12**
Honduras	6	3	1	2	18	11	10
St Vincent	6	0	0	6	6	30	0

*Mexico qualify for final round

FINAL ROUND

02.03.97	Mexico-Canada 4-0
16.03.97	Costa Rica-Mexico 0-0
13.04.97	Mexico-Jamaica 6-0
20.04.97	USA-Mexico 2-2
08.06.97	El Salvador-Mexico 0-1
05.10.97	Mexico-El Salvador 5-0
12.10.97	Canada-Mexico 2-2
02.11.97	Mexico-USA 0-0
09.11.97	Mexico-Costa Rica 3-3
16.11.97	Jamaica-Mexico 0-0

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
***Mexico**	**10**	**4**	**6**	**0**	**23**	**7**	**18**
USA	10	4	5	1	17	9	17
Jamaica	10	3	5	2	7	12	14
Costa Rica	10	3	3	4	13	12	12
El Salvador	10	2	4	4	11	16	10
Canada	10	1	3	6	5	20	6

*Mexico qualify for finals

FRANCE 98 SCHEDULE

June 13, v South Korea, Lyon
June 20, v Belgium, Bordeaux
June 25, v Holland, Saint-Etienne

QUESTIONS TO THE COACH

'We're going to France to win'

Manuel Lapuente

● ***How would you define a good World Cup for Mexico?***
By doing what we did in the USA in 1994 – getting to the second stage. Then we lost on penalties to Bulgaria, who nearly reached the Final.

● ***Which country do you think will win the trophy?***
Brazil are the obvious favourites, but it will be very hard for a non-European team to do it. The winners are likely to be a country that has won it before – so Brazil, Germany, Italy, Argentina or England.

● ***How do you rate the other three nations in your first-round group?***
Every team in the world can be beaten. We're going to France to win, otherwise there's no point in going. We have to prepare ourselves so that we can do it on the day, prepare ourselves mentally as well as physically.

● ***Why did you wait until June 2, the FIFA deadline, to announce your squad?***
I gave a preliminary list in April when we came back from our trip to South America, and I'm sure that at least 85 per cent of those players will be in my final squad.

● ***Does 85 per cent mean that you are thinking of discarding some?***
Absolutely not! I need to watch some of the young recent recruits right until the last possible moment, that's all.

● ***Won't this delay work against team morale?***
I've made clear from the start that anybody called up for the national squad must make sacrifices. I intend to take the players away from their normal life for 60 days, and they should expect to live as if they were in a monastery. But 60 days away from home and family is not as bad as it sounds. The prize is to play in a World Cup.

● ***You have played several games against club teams, who are naturally keen to do well against a World Cup nation, and with your players tired from so many matches and so much travel has it been a good idea?***
I need to see my players in action as often as possible, even if some results are poor. I want to know as much as I can about my players so the team for France is as strong as possible. I have been following the plan I laid down when I took over.

● ***How do you view Mexico's rise to fourth in the FIFA world rankings?***
If we were that good, everybody would want to play us, but they don't. We were not invited to the King Hassan Cup in Morocco, which was a big disappointment. Perhaps the rating will mean we get a 'Yes' when we ask to play Brazil, France or Germany.

Interview: Carlos F Ramirez

HOW THEY LINE UP

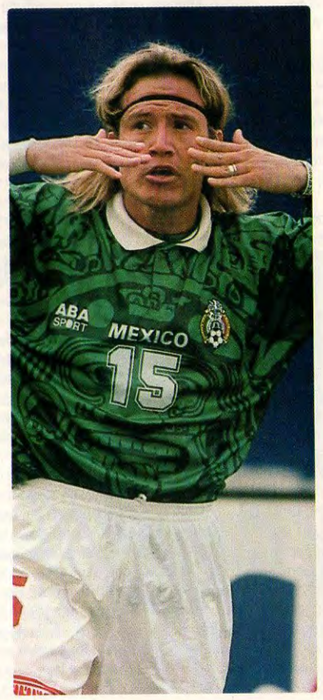
In front of the colourful Campos in goal, Lapuente goes for a mix of youth and experience, with Davino now established alongside Suarez, Mexico's most capped player ever. Suarez can also be used as a defensive midfielder. Villa could take a ball-winning role in midfield allowing Aspe to attack, while Ramirez uses his pace on the left. Luna pulls the strings behind the front two pairing, which is likely to be Blanco and Hernandez, though the proven international quality of Luis Garcia and Hermosillo may see them come into the action.

NAME	CLUB	AGE	CAPS	GLS
GOALKEEPERS				
Jorge Campos	UNAM Pumas	31	89	0
Osvaldo Sanchez	America	26	4	0
Oscar Perez	Cruz Azul	22	6	0
DEFENDERS				
Pavel Pardo	Atlas	21	37	0
Salvador Carmona	Toluca	23	11	0
Isaac Terrazas	America	23	2	0
Claudio Suarez	Guadalajara	29	105	2
Duilio Davino	America	22	41	0
David Oteo	UNAM Pumas	25	1	0
Joel Sanchez	Guadalajara	24	11	0
MIDFIELDERS				
German Villa	America	25	26	0
Ramon Ramirez	Guadalajara	28	82	12
Jaime Ordiales	Toluca	35	15	0
Marcelino Bernal	Monterrey	36	66	0
Braulio Luna	UNAM Pumas	24	9	1
Jesus Arellano	Guadalajara	26	0	0
Alberto Garcia Aspe	America	31	69	11
Paulo Cesar Chavez	Guadalajara	23	3	0
FORWARDS				
Luis Garcia	Atlante	29	79	25
Luis Hernandez	Necaxa	29	40	18
Ricardo Pelaez	America	35	30	12
Cuauhtemoc Blanco	Necaxa	25	34	12
Francisco Palencia	Cruz Azul	25	11	5
Carlos Hermosillo	Cruz Azul	33	89	32

Players to watch

LUIS HERNANDEZ > An outstanding all-round performer, composed and confident in attack or midfield. He has been in fine form this year, and is now happy to be back in Mexico, with Necaxa, after a spell in Argentina with Boca Juniors.

CUAUHTEMOC BLANCO >> A young striker and a team-mate of Hernandez at Necaxa. He has the talent to become a genuine star, although he does not get much TV exposure. That is because he plays for a non-Televisa club – not because the commentators can't pronounce his name!



THE VIEW FROM MEXICO

HUGO SANCHEZ, one of Mexico's all-time great players

"The coach and his team are in dreamland if they think they can bring the World Cup back from France."

Just champion…Andy Moller and his team-mates know what it takes to win the World Cup

The mighty on the march

Old guard will help to keep those results coming

SPOT the youngster is an irreverent game which will be played around the German squad the longer the World Cup goes on.

Experience is important at the four-yearly gathering of the game's superstars but youthful legs are also needed to survive the physical intensity of seven games inside four weeks.

Not that coach Berti Vogts will admit to being worried by such considerations. He intends to take the best current team he can, and if that means including players such as Jurgen Klinsmann and, most controversially, Lothar Matthaus, who are virtually football geriatrics, then so be it.

Germany will carry with them all the usual psychological weapons. Their opponents know that no squad will have prepared as thoroughly as the Germans; that no team have a will to win to match the Germans; that no team possess the ability to hit back from the brink of defeat like the Germans.

As skipper Klinsmann says: "Other teams know that, even when they go two goals ahead against us, we still have the mental strength to come back and win. That frightens other teams. They worry that they have to do so much to beat us."

Sometimes the Germans beat themselves, however, above all when there is dissent in the ranks – which is why the last-minute recall of Matthaus to cover for the injured Matthias Sammer at sweeper is such a gamble. Matthaus and Klinsmann have had their differences both at Bayern Munich and within the national team in the past.

Matthaus says he will be good, that "we are men and we can talk things over." Whether they can maintain a peace pact in the intensity of the World Cup spotlight may be another matter.

Ironically, both may be on the bench. Vogts believes Germany may never have gone to a World Cup with such an array of striking talent, and the fine form of Ulf Kirsten in the Bundesliga and Oliver Bierhoff in Serie A means 'Klinsi' could be reduced to the role of cheerleader. As for Matthaus at the back, logic suggests that he will start as reserve to Schalke's Olaf Thon, the previously accepted deputy for Sammer.

After an unconvincing qualifying campaign, Vogts was clearly encouraged by the March friendly against Brazil in Stuttgart, despite the fact that the South Americans won 2-1. He said: "How many points did this cost us in our World Cup group? None. I believe we're heading in the right direction."

Franz Beckenbauer, successful captain in 1974 and national coach the last time Germany won the World Cup, in 1990, is similarly optimistic. He says: "We saw how Brazil can be beaten. They are no miracle team, they have 11 normal human beings. For 89 minutes we were the better team. We deserved to win."

That defeat ended an unbeaten run of 22 matches dating back to June 1996, when Germany lost 1-0 to France. Vogts often refers to that match as his "favourite defeat" because, only weeks later, Germany beat the Czech Republic with Bierhoff's golden goal in the European Championship Final.

Qualifying for the World Cup may turn out to have been the most awkward part of the German campaign. In their final qualifier last October in Hanover, they made hard work of beating Albania 4-3, relying on another Bierhoff winner in the dying seconds to narrowly clinch automatic qualification and avoid the play-offs.

It was not only in that match that Bierhoff came to the rescue. In Belfast against Northern Ireland the Milan-bound striker scored three times in seven minutes – the fastest hat-trick in German international history – to turn a 1-0 deficit into a 3-1 win.

The veteran state of his squad means Vogts is under pressure to throw in a few youngsters but he will not pick the likes of Bayern Munich midfielder Dietmar Hamann or Leverkusen defender Christian Worns for the sake of it. He will stand by his men – such as Andreas Kopke, Jurgen Kohler, Andreas Moller and Thomas Hassler. They have seen it all before.

As Klinsmann says: "This World Cup will be, I hope, five fascinating weeks for us culminating with the Final. It will be particularly important for me as it will give me the opportunity of retiring from the national team on the highest note possible."

Keir Radnedge

HOW THEY QUALIFIED

EUROPEAN SECTION, GROUP 9

09.10.96.....Armenia-Germany 1-5
09.11.96.....Germany-Northern Ireland..1-1
14.12.96.....Portugal-Germany 0-0
02.04.97.....Albania-Germany 2-3
30.04.97.....Germany-Ukraine 2-0
07.06.97.....Ukraine-Germany 0-0
20.08.97.....Northern Ireland-Germany..1-3
06.09.97.....Germany-Portugal 1-1
10.09.97.....Germany-Armenia 4-0
11.10.97.....Germany-Albania.....4-3

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
***Germany .....**	**10**	**6**	**4**	**0**	**23**	**9**	**22**
Ukraine.....	10	6	2	2	10	6	20
Portugal.....	10	5	4	1	12	4	19
Armenia.....	10	1	5	4	8	17	8
N Ireland	10	1	4	5	6	10	7
Albania	10	1	1	8	7	20	4

*Germany qualify as group winners

FRANCE 98 SCHEDULE

June 15
v USA, Paris
June 21
v Yugoslavia, Lens
June 25
v Iran, Montpellier

QUESTIONS TO THE COACH

'We have the best team and the best team spirit'

Berti Vogts

● ***What is your target for Germany at this World Cup?***
Our biggest goal is to play good football. If we succeed in this, then results will follow. Getting through the first round is a must, and, after that, with some luck we can be successful in the knockout phase. I would never predict that we will become world champions, but I think we can achieve it. Other teams have more talent than we have but we can still beat them. We showed that at Euro 96. It was not that we were inferior to other teams there, but we had so many injuries at that tournament that it was incredible that we came through as we did in the end.

● ***Who do you think will win the World Cup?***
Brazil are the obvious favourites. After them, there is a group of teams who all have a good chance of doing well. I put France, Italy, England and Argentina in this category, as well as ourselves.

● ***Who are your most important players?***
No single player is all-important. What matters is the team. It was with this philosophy that we won Euro 96. Other countries certainly have better players. We, however, have the best team and the best team spirit.

● ***Who do you expect to be the surprise teams and players?***
Nigeria have a good chance to be a revelation. By winning the Olympic title in Atlanta in 1996, they showed they know how to tap their great potential. Naturally a clutch of new stars will emerge at the World Cup. But who can say who they will be?

● ***How do you rate your group opponents?***
It's our responsibility to pick up six points from the games against USA and Iran, but we will only do so if we are fully concentrated on our job. Against Yugoslavia, we need a first-class performance. Our aim is to make sure of first place in our group.

● ***What tactical developments do you expect in France?***
I don't foresee any major tactical revolutions at the World Cup.

● ***What is your view on automatic red cards for tackles from behind?***
The new FIFA instructions on the tackle from behind are very questionable. It doesn't take into account that a challenge from behind can be fair. Not every tackle from behind is a foul. Perhaps more practical questions should have been asked before such a rule change was decided.

● ***Who is going to make up your first-choice forward line?***
I haven't made a firm decision. I'm happy to have three top strikers in Klinsmann, Bierhoff and Kirsten. A fourth front-man could come into the equation. We will vary the look of our front line from game to game.

● ***How important is Jurgen Klinsmann to your plans?***
Very. He's our captain and still our fastest forward. The German media think he has had a bad season, but he is rediscovering his form at just the right time for the finals. He is in good shape at the moment and can get better still. Of course, Bierhoff and Kirsten have put pressure on Jurgen to perform, but that's good. Jurgen is an outstanding professional and knows he has to battle for a place in the team. I'm confident he will be up to the challenge.

● ***Which quality more than any other will enable Germany to make a strong bid for the World Cup?***
The excellent atmosphere within our squad. Both on and off the pitch, the players have got the utmost respect for each other. There is a real unity of purpose in our camp.

Interview: Nick Bidwell

HOW THEY LINE UP

As surely as night follows day, Germany will play a 3-5-2 formation with two stoppers and a sweeper at the back, two midfield workhorses, two wide men and an attacking midfielder, plus two strikers. There will be a few famous names on the bench: Matthaus will deputise for Thon in the absence of the injured Sammer and Klinsmann will be edged out by the form of Bierhoff and Kirsten up front. Hamann and Jeremies will do the legwork in midfield, while Moller and the veteran Hassler will play together in the absence of alternative creative influences in midfield.

NAME	CLUB	AGE	CAPS	GLS
GOALKEEPERS				
Andreas Kopke	Marseille (Fra)	36	51	0
Oliver Kahn	Bayern Munich	28	9	0
Jens Lehmann	Schalke 04	28	1	0
DEFENDERS				
Lothar Matthaus	Bayern Munich	37	122	22
Thomas Helmer	Bayern Munich	33	65	4
Jurgen Kohler	Borussia Dortmund	32	98	2
Stefan Reuter	Borussia Dortmund	31	66	2
Markus Babbel	Bayern Munich	25	28	1
Olaf Thon	Schalke 04	32	46	3
Christian Worns	Bayer Leverkusen	26	14	0
MIDFIELDERS				
Thomas Hassler	Karlsruhe	32	91	11
Andreas Moller	Borussia Dortmund	30	77	27
Christian Ziege	Milan (Ita)	26	35	3
Jorg Heinrich	Borussia Dortmund	28	13	2
Steffen Freund	Borussia Dortmund	28	19	0
Dietmar Hamann	Bayern Munich	24	4	1
Michael Tarnat	Bayern Munich	28	10	0
Jens Jeremies	1860 Munich	24	3	0
FORWARDS				
Oliver Bierhoff	Udinese (Ita)	30	23	14
Jurgen Klinsmann	Tottenham (Eng)	33	101	43
Ulf Kirsten	Bayer Leverkusen	32	29*	12
**plus 49 caps for East Germany*				
Olaf Marschall	Bayer Leverkusen	32	4*	2
**plus 4 caps for East Germany*				

Players to watch

OLIVER BIERHOFF >
The hero of Euro 96 and the top scorer in Serie A this season for surprise package Udinese. Bierhoff, who will join Milan after the World Cup, is a hard-working striker whose aerial strength will be one of Germany's greatest assets in France.

DIETMAR HAMANN >>
Bayern Munich's 24-year-old midfielder is one of the few young German players to have struggled out and above the increasingly numerous ranks of foreign players in the Bundesliga. If he can maintain his league form then his workhorse contribution could be vital in obtaining the possession for Andy Moller and Thomas Hassler to use in attack .

THE VIEW FROM GERMANY

WOLFGANG TOBIEN, Kicker *magazine*

"The strength of the German squad is the experience available. Eleven players were members of the squad of in 1996 in England and nine of the players were at the 1994 World Cup finals in the United States. Berti Vogts has given all players an incentive, even those in the standby squad of 13 because anyone can get injured before the finals begin.

"Matthaus is back because, on form, he was the obvious selection after Sammer withdrew. Sammer is not the only big name who is missed. Mario Basler has been left out because of a knee injury. I think Vogts is concerned because he does not have a lot of young players to bring into his squad. But what can he do? Only pick the players who are the best available."

Once, twice...and the USA make it three World Cup finals on the trot

Sampson short on strength

A packed midfield can't hide the lack of real class

THIS is the third time in a row that the USA have qualified for the World Cup, but their prospects of progress to the second round, which they reached last time by finishing third out of four in their group, are none too good.

They now have a squad of full-time professionals, many of whom play abroad. While this obviously offers invaluable experience, the difficulties in forming a real team from a collection of players thousands of miles apart are self-evident.

Goalkeeper Kasey Keller – likely to be a busy man in France – and midfielder Claudio Reyna are the only real world-class performers. The others in the squad all have their good points, and can show flashes of brilliance, but they lack the consistency that modern football demands.

Coach Steve Sampson, who took over from Bora Milutinovic after 1994, has the best record in charge so far, but is still seen by many as not being the complete answer, if such a being exists.

One decision Sampson may regret is his omission of John Harkes the former captain and midfield inspiration, after a dispute over the player's role. The new captain, Thomas Dooley, is 36, which, not to put too fine a point on it, is fairly old to withstand an arduous World Cup. The midfielder's loss, however, is the defence's gain. Dooley will play sweeper behind two marking back: Eddie Pope and, if his citizenship comes through in time, Martinique-born Frenchman David Regis.

Sampson considers the midfield to be the team's strongest element, even without Harkes. Indeed, in the 3-0 win over Austria, a novel line-up of six across the middle and one forward worked like a charm, but then the Austrians were hardly a real test.

The formation saw the pairing of Chad Deering and Brian Maisonneuve playing deep as defensive midfielders, allowing free reign to Reyna and his creative wiles. Reyna responded with one goal and two assists, his best game ever for the national side.

Wynalda, Preki and McBride are all proven goal scorers, but Jones, Stewart and Reyna can all score.

Another plus is that Reyna, Wynalda, Moore and Preki are all highly-skilled at taking free-kicks and corners, with Sampson claiming: "In dead-ball situations we're one of the best teams in the Cup. We'll be very dangerous."

It is in cover for the first-team, however, where Sampson may be limited. Although Keller's back-up, Friedel, gives the USA what is possibly the best goalkeeping duo in the tournament, the same cannot be said for the defence. If Regis does not obtain his citizenship in time, the starter will be Burns, a terrier-like tackler and harrier, but only so-so when it comes to the aerial game or distribution. The left-footed Agoos can play centrally or on the left, but is ageing and lacking speed. Ditto for Balboa, whose game shows signs of acquiring an unwelcome physical edge. Lalas, in my opinion, is lucky to be in squad.

Fortunately there are some good midfielders at Sampson's disposal. Hejduk, in one of the flank positions, has plenty of speed and skill, but immaturity is a problem. Moore is a dynamic midfield forager who can play up front as well. Ramos, veteran of the past two World Cups, could be a starter, possibly in place of Wynalda. If not, his unique brand of midfield trickery and shooting power can be a useful substitute weapon.

Up front, there are few options. The left-footed Preki scored two winning goals as a late substitute in the Gold Cup, but no longer has any surprise value. Wegerle came through well in the qualifiers, but whether he is up to the pace of the World Cup pace is another thing.

All in all, the outlook is good, but limited.

Paul Gardner

HOW THEY QUALIFIED

CONCACAF – SEMI-FINAL ROUND, GROUP 1

03.11.96.....USA-Guatemala 2-0
10.11.96.....USA-Trinidad & Tobago 2-0
24.11.96.....Trinidad & Tobago-USA 0-1
01.12.96.....Costa Rica-USA 2-1
14.12.96.....USA-Costa Rica 2-1
21.12.96.....Guatemala-USA 2-2

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
***USA**	**6**	**4**	**1**	**1**	**10**	**5**	**13**
*Costa Rica	6	4	0	2	9	5	12
Guatemala	6	2	2	2	6	9	8
Trin. & Tobago	6	0	1	5	3	9	1

*USA and Costa Rica qualify for final round

FINAL ROUND

02.03.97.....Jamaica-USA.....0-0
16.03.97.....USA-Canada 3-0
23.03.97.....Costa Rica-USA 3-2
20.04.97.....USA-Mexico.....2-2
29.06.97.....El Salvador-USA 1-1
07.09.97.....USA-Costa Rica 1-0
03.10.97.....USA-Jamaica.....1-1
02.11.97.....Mexico-USA.....0-0
09.11.97.....Canada-USA 0-3
16.11.97.....USA-El Salvador 4-2

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Mexico	10	4	6	0	23	7	18
***USA**	**10**	**4**	**5**	**1**	**17**	**9**	**17**
Jamaica	10	3	5	2	7	12	14
Costa Rica	10	3	3	4	13	12	12
El Salvador	10	2	4	4	11	16	10
Canada	10	1	3	6	5	20	6

*USA qualify for as group runners-up

FRANCE 98 SCHEDULE

June 15,
v Germany, Paris
June 21,
v Iran, Lyon
June 25,
v Yugoslavia, Nantes

QUESTIONS TO THE COACH

'Our opponents have a lot to lose and nothing to gain'

Steve Sampson

● ***What would be a good result for you in France?***
To get to the second round would be a remarkable achievement given the strength of our group.

● ***How do you rate your group opponents?***
Germany are the strongest, then Yugoslavia. Iran? We simply have to get three points from them.

● ***Who are your key men?***
Goalkeepers Kasey Keller and Brad Friedel, defenders Thomas Dooley and Eddie Pope, midfielders Claudio Reyna, Cobi Jones, Ernie Stewart and Joe-Max Moore. Up front Eric Wynalda and Preki.

● ***Who will win the Cup?***
Brazil.

● ***Who will be the surprise teams?***
Nigeria, and the United States – why not?

● ***And the star players...***
Shearer, Ronaldo, Roberto Carlos, Zinedine Zidane, Marcelo Salas, Oliver Bierhoff and Kasey Keller.

● ***Will we see any tactical innovations?***
This will be a World Cup where individual brilliance will make the difference, not defensive tactics or a tactical approach. It will come down to one player who cashes in on a mistake from an opponent, or the brilliance of an individual, magnificent goal.

● ***Are the USA a team other countries don't want to play – a spoiler?***
I think so. We contacted dozens of federations for friendly warm-up games and so many opted not to play us. We are a team who, especially in Europe, still lack respect. As they see it, they've everything to lose but nothing to gain in playing us. Austria, for example, saw the USA as an easy tune-up – they expected to win, certainly not to lose by three goals.

● ***What are your reasons for dropping John Harkes?***
I've been concerned with his play over the past months: his errant passes when not under pressure, not working back, but expecting others to cover for him. The not-defending problem has been an issue for some time. When I moved him to the middle of midfield, where he wants to be, his passing was poor. Possibly it's a lack of form, and I've stated that he's playing better now for DC United. But they're not international games. He had that opportunity. But it's also off-the-field issues: leadership and discipline. I understand he's improved in these areas too. He's asked for the chance to prove that he's changed and the door is not completely shut, but it's unlikely I will add him to the squad.

● ***Is it a disciplinary ploy, and you'll recall him at the last moment...***
(Long pause) This is not an issue of Steve Sampson playing mind games with John Harkes.

● ***In the qualifiers, there were a lot of yellow cards for dissent. Is discipline a problem?***
It concerns me, yes. Since Claudio Reyna's yellow against Jamaica, cards for dissent have been all but eliminated, in part because anyone receiving a yellow is fined a minimum of $1000. Jeff Agoos was fined $1,500 for his red card against Mexico. I'm taking it very seriously. It affects the entire team and will not be tolerated.

● ***Will defensive play be the key to your success?***
Taking intelligent risks is what will be important. That doesn't mean being overly defensive, or overly offensive. We must be able to play with great intelligence, choose the right times to send players forward and the right times to drop back.

● ***Will the USA be a counter-attacking team?***
I don't want to categorise this team as being a purely counter-attack one. It's a tool we can use during certain games, not a single characteristic.

Interview: Paul Gardner

HOW THEY LINE UP

Goalkeeper Kasey Keller is the automatic first choice and a player of real talent. Otherwise a packed midfield and defence – half newcomers, half veterans – are likely to be on view as the Americans try to disguise their lack of world class by restricting opportunities to opponents. Up front, six-footer Brian McBride will be employed as the sole forward, which inevitably makes him into a target-man, and seems to encourage the use of the long ball forward. Tactically it's not what coach Sampson would like to advocate but with the players he has, it is hard to see how it will be avoided.

NAME	CLUB	AGE	CAPS	GLS
GOALKEEPERS				
Kasey Keller	Leicester City (Eng)	28	29	0
Brad Friedel	Liverpool (Eng)	27	57	0
Jurgen Sommer	Columbus Crew	29	7	0
DEFENDERS				
Alexi Lalas	NY/NJ Metrostars	28	97	9
Marcelo Balboa	Colorado Rapids	30	126	12
Mike Burns	New England Revolution	27	70	0
Eddie Pope	DC United	24	20	2
Jeff Agoos	DC United	30	84	3
Thomas Dooley	Columbus Crew	37	74	1
David Regis	Karlsruhe (Ger)	29	0	0
Frankie Hejduk	Tampa Bay Mutiny	23	11	2
MIDFIELDERS				
Tab Ramos	NY/NJ Metrostars	31	77	6
Claudio Reyna	Wolfsburg (Ger)	24	58	7
Cobi Jones	Los Angeles Galaxy	27	105	8
Chad Deering	Wolfsburg (Ger)	27	7	6
Brian Maisonneuve	Columbus Crew	24	4	0
Joe-Max Moore	New England Revolution	27	65	16
Ernie Stewart	NAC Breda (Hol)	29	45	5
FORWARDS				
Eric Wynalda	San Jose Clash	28	98	31
Roy Wegerle	DC United	34	35	7
Preki Radosavljevic	Kansas City Wizards	34	20	5
Brian McBride	Columbus Crew	25	20	5

Players to watch

CLAUDIO REYNA >
The most promising of the USA's new young players. The coach Sampson has built the midfield around him, even dropping Harkes as they were thought incompatible. Good technical skills, comfortable with the ball, creative playmaker and accurate passer.

EDDIE POPE >>
Another of the new generation, excellent defensive skills, quick, and a goal-poacher at set plays. His lack of experience at international level could be the stumbling block.

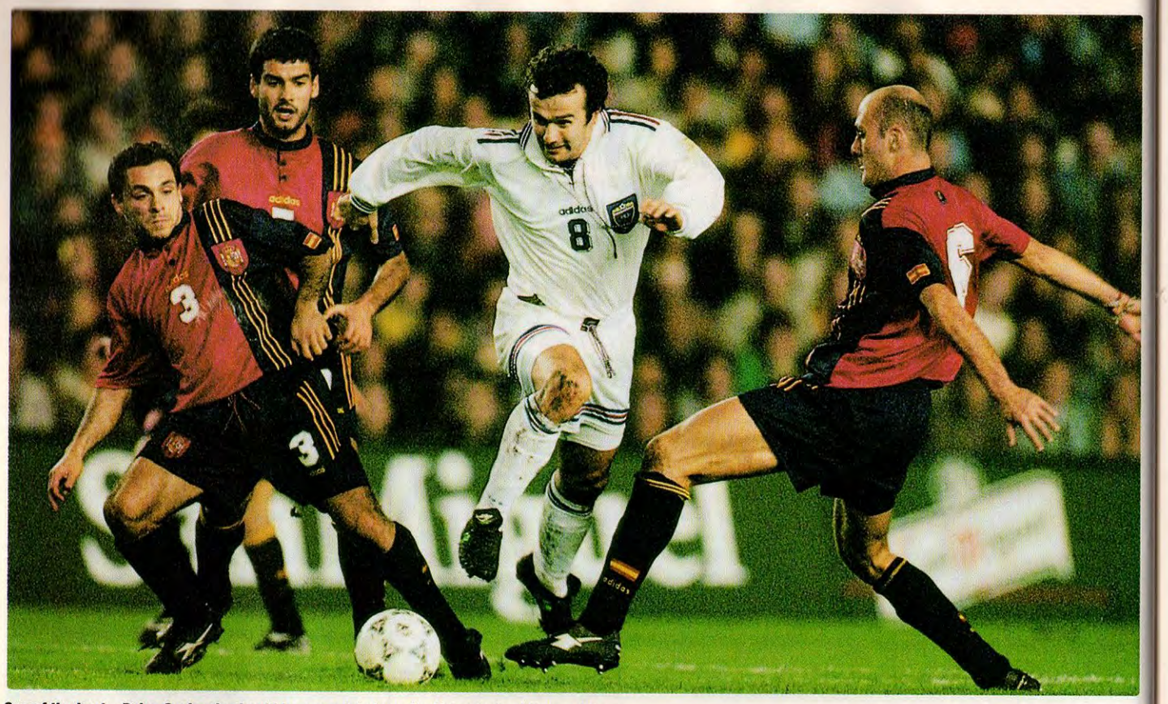
THE VIEW FROM THE USA

PAUL KENNEDY, managing editor of Soccer America since 1985

"The team have demonstrated an ability to pull off big upsets, first under Bora Milutinovic, and now under Steve Sampson. Is it luck? Sure, to a certain extent, but the success in the 1990s is proof of the strong character of the American athlete. It also helps that Sampson has a big-time goalkeeper in Kasey Keller. We need strong performances from him – and lots of luck – to go through to the second round from a very difficult group.

"Milutinovic coached the team into the second round in 1994, relying on his ability to organise. Sampson has given his team, the backbone of which is the same as it was in '94, lots more freedom, but their play is too direct to seriously trouble the Germans and Yugoslavs. In dropping Harkes and introducing a 3-6-1 formation, Sampson is putting tremendous pressure on two very inexperienced players – Maisonneuve and Deering – to hold the midfield together.

"Eric Wynalda is the all-time leading scorer for the USA, and he has the added tribute of being just as capable of creating chances as taking them himself. Unfortunately, his poor winter and the injury he sustained early in the MLS season could take their toll."



One of the best...Dejan Savicevic should be a crucial player for Yugoslavia at France 98

HOW THEY QUALIFIED

EUROPEAN SECTION, GROUP 6

24.04.96.....Yugoslavia-Faroe Islands ...3-1
02.06.96.....Yugoslavia-Malta.....6-0
06.10.96.....Faroe Islands-Yugoslavia ...1-8
10.11.96.....Yugoslavia-Czech Republic 1-0
14.12.96.....Spain-Yugoslavia.....2-0
02.04.97.....Czech Republic-Yugoslavia 1-2
30.04.97.....Yugoslavia-Spain.....1-1
08.06.97.....Yugoslavia-Slovakia 2-0
10.09.97.....Slovakia-Yugoslavia 1-1
11.10.97.....Malta-Yugoslavia.....0-5

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Spain	10	8	2	0	26	6	26
***Yugoslavia**	**10**	**7**	**2**	**1**	**29**	**7**	**23**
Czech Rep	10	5	1	4	16	6	16
Slovakia	10	5	1	4	18	14	16
Faroe Islands	10	2	0	8	10	31	6
Malta	10	0	0	10	2	37	0

*Yugoslavia enter play-offs

PLAY-OFFS

29.10.97 .....Hungary-Yugoslavia 1-7
15.11.97 .....Yugoslavia-Hungary 5-0
*Yugoslavia win 12-1 on agg and qualify for finals

Back in contention

Yugoslavia have emerged from isolation with talent in abundance

THE EUPHORIA that followed Yugoslavia's 12-1 aggregate humbling of Hungary in the World Cup play-offs is now being tempered by a much-needed dose of realism. Not just because of the recent calf injury suffered by star striker Predrag Mijatovic – an injury which should not threaten his presence in France, but could leave him match rusty.

A few months ago, the consensus of opinion in Belgrade was that the Slavs and Germany would sweep past Iran and USA en route to the last 16 in France.

Then US victories this year over Brazil and Austria forced a rethink, and the substitution of humility for complacency might not be a bad move for a Yugoslav side who have a tradition of contriving to lose the plot at World Cup finals.

National team keeper Ivica Kralj of Partizan Belgrade sums up the current mood by saying: "If we don't reach the quarter-finals, it will be a bad blow. But we are under no illusions about the task ahead. Germany are always powerful, while the USA are obviously very competitive and certainly don't have an inferiority complex. Iran should be easier opponents, but we must get it right, right from the start. We won't be able to relax at any stage in the first round."

Warm-up matches this spring produced decent scorelines – a goalless draw in Bogota against Colombia and a 3-1 home victory over South Korea – but the team's performances were decidedly patchy.

National coach Slobodan Santrac, however, can be heartened by the way debutants Dejan Stankovic and Perica Ognjenovic grabbed the chance to stake a late claim for a place in the World Cup run.

Stankovic, the golden boy of Yugoslav League football at 19, marked his international bow against South Korea with a pair of excellent headed goals and gave a midfield display brimming with flair and composure. His Red Star Belgrade team-mate Ognjenovic was equally impressive in attack after going on as a substitute for the disappointing Anto Drobnjak.

Although Santrac is likely to start the World Cup with Lazio-bound Stankovic on the bench, his emergence is important to Yugoslavia. Not only will he bring his youthful enthusiasm to an ageing squad, but he also has the versatility to operate either in midfield or as an attacking foil. If the notoriously injury-prone Dejan Savicevic fails to last the pace, his young namesake could be the one called up to fill the gap.

Other Slavs to show up well in recent friendlies included the 1860 Munich playmaker Miroslav Stevic, central defender Nisa Saveljic of Bordeaux and prolific Real Sociedad scorer Darko Kovacevic. But the best they can hope for this summer is second-string status. The flag in France will be flown by the usual Yugoslav ensemble of highly experienced talent based in Italy and Spain.

Yugoslavia complete their preparations with a game against Nigeria in Belgrade on May 30 and a nine-day training camp in Lausanne (June 1-9), where they will play Japan (June 3) and Switzerland (June 6). They head for their World Cup base, St Galmier in the suburbs of Saint-Etienne, on June 10.

Nick Bidwell

FRANCE 98 SCHEDULE

June 14, v Iran, Saint-Etienne
June 21, v Germany, Lens
June 25, v USA, Nantes

QUESTIONS TO THE COACH

'The atmosphere in the squad is excellent'

Slobodan Santrac

● ***What would constitute success for you in France?***
I think we have a real chance of reaching the second round. After that, each game will be a real challenge for us. It would be extraordinary if we could make it to the quarter-finals or semis.

● ***How do you rate your group opponents?***
One would expect Germany, Yugoslavia and the USA to fight for the first two places. I disagree with the opinion that the German team is not as good as usual. They are always very strong, particularly in tournaments. The USA showed recently they can be dangerous – it will be anything but easy against them. Iran are the underdogs, even though I am aware one cannot underestimate any opponent in the World Cup.

● ***Who are your key players?***
Mijatovic, Savicevic, Stojkovic, Jugovic, Jokanovic and Mihajlovic. What makes me optimistic is they all think about the squad – not just the first team or themselves.

● ***Who will win the World Cup?***
Though I think France 98 could contain many surprises, the favourites will probably be those nations who have dominated past World Cups – Brazil, Argentina, Italy, Germany and England.

● ***Who will be the surprise teams?***
Yugoslavia, Norway, Spain, France and Nigeria. I believe those sides will raise the quality and value of the event.

● ***Who will be the star players?***
Everybody expects Ronaldo to be the biggest star. But there's also Del Piero, Moller, Bierhoff, Zidane, Shearer and Mijatovic.

● ***Will we see any tactical innovations?***
I think it will be a very tough competition, because all teams will have the ability to change tactics. Most teams will play 4-4-2, 3-5-2 or 4-1-4-1. Maybe there will be certain modifications of known systems, with reinforced defences and attacks.

● ***When you took charge of the national team in 1994, did you expect such an impressive comeback after the long absence from international soccer due to UN sanctions?***
Our first two matches, against Brazil and Argentina, showed we really had a strong team, but it was a side without genuine team spirit. One could feel we had been isolated. But at the Carlsberg Cup in Hong Kong in February 1995, I convinced myself the Yugoslav team had a future.

● ***What does your team need to reach the top?***
More aggression. The best example was in our match against South Korea [won 3-1 after being a goal down at half-time]. In the first half, we were too soft. But in the second half, we were aggressive in attack and at the same time cool and clever, keeping possession in the last 20 minutes. If we could continue to play as we did in the second half that day, we could be a very strong team indeed.

● ***Can you avoid the discord between coaching staff and players that has affected your chances in past World Cup finals?***
The atmosphere in the squad is excellent. Unfortunately, the Yugoslav public wants to discredit me – they say I don't have enough coaching experience. Well, what kind of experience do Cesare Maldini or Berti Vogts have? Neither was a club coach. I spent five years with the youth team at FC Galenika Zemun and two-and-a-half seasons as head coach, guiding the club from the Third Division to the First Division. Some people say I'm not making decisions independently, which is not true. But that's the way of things in our country. If you become successful, people try to trip you.

Interview: Vladimir Nowak

HOW THEY LINE UP

The base formation is 4-4-2, but the team have the sophistication to slip into a 3-4-2-1 system when required. In the 4-4-2, Mihajlovic plays sweeper and playmaker Stojkovic floats behind the main attackers. With the 3-4-2-1, Mihajlovic is pushed forward from libero to left midfield, leaving Djukic at the defensive controls. Jokanovic drops deeper and Mijatovic goes up front alone, with Stojkovic and Savicevic just behind. In both systems the watchwords are fluidity and adventure, but this side is definitely not work-shy. Jugovic, Jokanovic and Brnovic will cover every blade of grass.

NAME	CLUB	AGE	CAPS	GLS
GOALKEEPERS				
Ivica Kralj	Partizan Belgrade	25	15	0
Aleksandar Kocic	Perugia (Ita)	29	15	0
Dragoje Lekovic	Sporting Gijon (Spa)	30	11	0
DEFENDERS				
Zoran Mirkovic	Atalanta (Ita)	26	27	0
Risto Vidakovic	Real Betis (Spa)	29	8	0
Albert Nadj	Real Betis (Spa)	23	24	1
Sinisa Mihajlovic	Sampdoria (Ita)	29	28	4
Miroslav Djukic	Valencia (Spa)	32	23	1
Goran Djorovic	Celta Vigo (Spa)	26	26	0
Nisa Saveljic	Bordeaux (Fra)	28	18	1
MIDFIELDERS				
Slavisa Jokanovic	Tenerife (Spa)	29	31	7
Branko Brnovic	Espanyol (Spa)	30	20	3
Vladimir Jugovic	Lazio (Ita)	28	22	3
Dragan Stojkovic	Grampus Eight (Jap)	33	62	12
Zeljko Petrovic	Urawa Reds (Jap)	32	11	0
Ljubinko Drulovic	Porto (Por)	29	14	1
Dejan Govedarica	Lecce (Ita)	28	20	1
Milinko Pantic	Atletico Madrid (Spa)	31	2	0
FORWARDS				
Dejan Savicevic	Milan (Ita)	31	49	20
Predrag Mijatovic	Real Madrid (Spa)	29	27	14
Savo Milosevic	Aston Villa (Eng)	24	26	14
Darko Kovacevic	Real Sociedad (Spa)	24	16	3
Dejan Stankovic	Red Star Belgrade	19	1	2
Anto Drobnjak	Lens (Fra)	29	6	3

Players to watch

PREDRAG MIJATOVIC>>
Star man. All Yugoslavia will be hoping their top scorer recovers from a calf injury sustained playing for Real Madrid. Mijatovic, Europe's leading marksman in the World Cup qualifiers with 14 goals, is a consummate taker of chances.

SLAVISA JOKANOVIC>>
A midfielder who is arguably the squad's most-improved player of the past couple of years. Has good distribution, is industrious, tactically streetwise, and scores plenty of goals thanks to his aerial ability and shooting power.

THE VIEW FROM YUGOSLAVIA

MOMCILO JOKIC, editor-in-chief of Sportski zurnal

● ***What are the team's strengths?***
Outstanding individual quality. They are excellent players, who have often shown their class and are based all over Europe. All are technically strong, so the attacking play can be varied and very effective.

● ***...and weaknesses?***
Lack of continuity at international level because of the sanctions. France 98 will be their first big tournament. It demands concentration, good physical preparation and 100 per cent commitment in each game. I'm not sure whether our side can show the necessary level of consistency.

● ***Who are the men to watch from your country?***
Predrag Mijatovic, who showed last year that he is one of the best players in the world. Vladimir Jugovic is one of Europe's top midfielders, and the captain, Dragan Stojkovic, and Sampdoria sweeper Sinisa Mihajlovic are both important, too. If Dejan Savicevic is fully fit, he will also be among the key players.

Qualified success...Iran celebrate their away goals victory over Australia, which booked their tickets to France

HOW THEY QUALIFIED

ASIAN QUALIFYING SECTION
FIRST ROUND, GROUP 2

02.06.97.....Maldives-Iran 0-17
04.06.97.....Kyrgyzstan-Iran 0-7
06.06.97.....Syria-Iran.....0-1
09.06.97.....Iran-Kyrgyzstan 3-1
11.06.97.....Iran-Maldives 9-0
15.06.97.....Iran-Syria.....2-2

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
***Iran**	**6**	**5**	**1**	**0**	**39**	**3**	**16**
Kyrgyzstan	5	3	0	2	12	11	9
Syria	5	2	1	2	27	5	7
Maldives	6	0	0	6	0	59	0

*Iran qualify for second round

SECOND ROUND, GROUP A

13.09.97.....China PR-Iran 2-4
19.09.97.....Iran-Saudi Arabia 1-1
26.09.97.....Kuwait-Iran.....1-1
03.10.97.....Iran-Qatar 3-0
17.10.97.....Iran-China PR 4-1
24.10.97.....Saudi Arabia-Iran 1-0
31.10.97.....Iran-Kuwait.....0-0
07.11.97.....Qatar-Iran 2-0

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
S Arabia	8	4	2	2	8	6	14
***Iran**	**8**	**3**	**3**	**2**	**13**	**8**	**12**
China PR	8	3	2	3	11	14	11
Qatar	8	3	1	4	7	10	10
Kuwait	8	2	2	4	7	8	8

*Iran enter play-off

PLAY-OFF (IN MALAYSIA)

16.11.97.....Japan-Iran 3-2
Iran enter Asia-Oceania play-off

ASIA-OCEANIA PLAY-OFF

22.11.97.....Iran-Australia 1-1
29.11.97.....Australia-Iran.....2-2

FRANCE 98 SCHEDULE

June 14
v Yugoslavia, Saint-Etienne
June 21
v USA, Lyon
June 25
v Germany, Montpellier

Getting used to losing

Iran's recent dip in form does not bode well for their chances

IRAN set all sorts of records on the way to France 98. They had a record World Cup victory, a record individual scorer, a crowd of nearly 130,000 at one match – and got through despite failing to win any of their last six qualifying games.

Their form in warm-up matches since then has been little better, if at all. They drew with Kuwait, went to France and beat Nantes but lost to Guingamp (later relegated from the top division) and Montpellier, then lost at home to Hungary, with the crowd jeering coach Tomislav Ivic out of the arena, before beating fellow finalists Jamaica 1-0. Prospects for three games that were forthcoming at press time did not look good: the opponents being Roma, Inter and Croatia, Ivic's home country.

The well-travelled Ivic has been in the game long enough to know the value of confidence, whether false or true. "I expect my team to beat Yugoslavia," he tells the media. "Maybe Germany, too." As for the third opponents, everybody in Iran knows that anything other than a win is unacceptable. After all, the United States and Iran have been political opponents for years, and hopes that their meeting in Lyon will be some sort of joint olive branch-waving ceremony seem unlikely to be fulfilled.

Midfielder Mehrdad Minivand summed up the squad's attitude when he said that the team would need God's help if they were to win, but added: "Our morale is high, and we are developing well as a team."

A lot depends on the three Europe-based players – Ali Daei and Karim Bagheri of Arminia Bielefeld and Khodadad Azizi of Koln – if Iran are to cause any surprises. Daei is still recovering after breaking a cheekbone playing for his club, but is expected to be fully fit for the finals.

Team doctor Hussein Barati was more than pleased with the condition of the squad. "They are 80 per cent fit, and we'll get the other 20 per cent in Rome and Milan," he said during a break in training at Borujerd, where several thousand supporters were turning up to watch the daily sessions.

Whether they can regain form as well as fitness is open to doubt. Iran were impressive during much of the long and complicated qualifying competition, which stretched from June to November, involved 17 matches in 10 different countries, and countless thousands of miles. Then they lost their way.

They opened their first-round group by beating the Maldives by a record 17-0 – away – and altogether recorded five wins and a draw. They led from the start of the five-team second stage, but took only one point from their last three matches and conceded top spot to Saudi Arabia. This meant a one-match play-off with Japan, winners of the other group, to decide who would go directly to France and who would need a home-and-away play-off with Australia, winners of the Oceania section.

Iran fell behind to the Japanese, recovered to go in front, then were pulled back to 2-2, and eventually lost in extra-time. This led to a 1-1 home draw with Australia before 128,000 in Tehran's Azadi Stadium, and seemingly certain elimination when they were two down with 17 minutes to play in Melbourne.

Then, however, Iran did something that even now, with so much apparently against them, will send a shiver up German, Yugoslav and American spines: they came back to draw, and qualify on away goals. It was an inspired spell for the Iranians, and showed that whatever they lack, they do not lack guts.

That finale produced a contrast in coaches. Australia were led by Terry Venables, who needs no introduction. He called that day the worst of his life. Iran were coached by Valdir Vieira, as much unknown in his native Brazil as anywhere else. He had taken over from Majeli Kohan midway through the qualifiers, and completed the job as the nation desired.

Then the federation changed presidents, and Vieira's achievement went for nothing. He was not considered to be the right man for the task in France, and Ivic was recruited – the team's third coach in four months and unable to speak more than a smattering of any of Iran's four official languages.

Iranians hope he proves to be the right choice. But they may find that Ivic, who has said of his squad, "I have a diamond – all it needs is polishing", may not have the right cloth.

Ole Pravidd

QUESTIONS TO THE COACH

'A victory over the USA is not impossible'

Tomislav Ivic

● ***What would be a good result for your team?***
Any victory would cause a sensation in Iran, and perhaps in other countries, too. A win over the United States would be perfect. We'll be very disappointed if we go home with our record showing us to be the worst team in the tournament.

● ***How do you rate your group opponents?***
Germany and Yugoslavia will go through to the next round. They have the ability and the experience that countries like Iran do not have. After that, Germany could go all the way to the Final. But the USA are nearer our level, and a victory over them is not impossible.

● ***Who will be the outstanding players?***
Ronaldo is the No. 1 choice, but I fear for him. He could be the victim of defensive brutality, despite the new regulations such as the tackle-from-behind rule. I also rate Alen Boksic very highly, but the Croatians must give him the right support.

● ***Who will win the Cup?***
Brazil are my first choice. There is no doubt that they have the most talent. Then I rate four teams about equal – France, Germany, Spain and England.

● ***Will any team cause a big surprise, like Bulgaria did four years ago?***
I have a feeling that Norway will go quite a long way.

● ***Who are the key men in your squad?***
I don't like putting pressure on players by naming them, but I must mention our goalkeeper, Ahmad Reza Abedzadeh, plus Karim Bagheri in midfield and Ali Daei in attack.

● ***Will we see any tactical innovations?***
We don't have three lines any more. Only two – defence and attack. We might well see quicker realisation of the possibilities when free-kicks are awarded under the new regulations. The key players are likely to be those defenders with the ability to win the ball and start quick counter-attacks – but then that's not new.

● ***Why did you take the national job?***
I took it because I like challenges. I was the coach of the United Arab Emirates at the Asian Cup, when we lost on penalties to Saudi Arabia. Even then I saw that Iran had some very talented players, so when Iran called me I didn't think twice.

● ***How have your preparations gone?***
Under normal conditions there would have been enough time to prepare. But I have had to spend a great deal of time just getting to know the players. Iranians are very fond of football, but they still have to invest in training facilities.

● ***Do you think an Asian team will ever win the World Cup?***
Hasn't the success of Nigeria at the last Olympics proved that the football map of the world is changing? I'm convinced that an Asian team will become a real threat to European and South American domination of the game. Iran, China and Japan will play a major role in the next World Cup in 2002. I'm not saying that they'll reach the Final, but at least one of them will make the last eight. And that's only two steps from the Final.

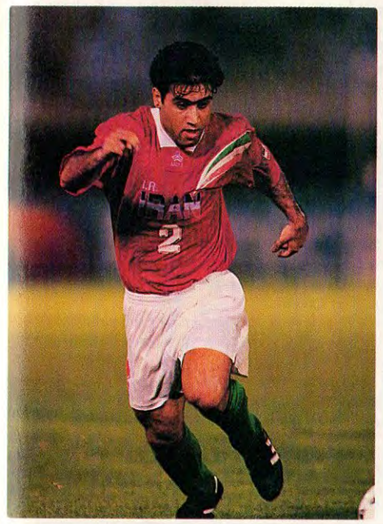
Interview: Zdravko Reic

HOW THEY LINE UP

Ivic tends to utilise Peyrovani as a sweeper with the experienced Khakpour and hard-tackling Falahatzadeh at the heart of the defence. Shahroudi will probably fill the left wing-back position, while on the right the promising young Akbarpour could be given the chance to show his dribbling skills. Estili is the midfield battler who covers for Bagheri when he launches his attacking runs, and the midfield is likely to be completed by the versatile Mahdavikia. Azizi and Daei are assured of places up front, with Mousavi a potential substitute.

NAME	CLUB	AGE	CAPS	GLS
GOALKEEPERS				
Ahmad Reza Abedzadeh	Pirouzi	32	70	0
Nima Nakisa	Pirouzi	23	7	0
DEFENDERS				
Naeem Saadavi	Pirouzi	26	19	1
Mohammad Khakpour	Pirouzi	29	37	1
Akbar Ostad Asadi	Zob-e-Ahan	32	31	0
Mehdi Pashazadeh	Esteghlal	24	4	0
Afsin Peyrovani	Pirouzi	28	36	0
Javad Zarrincheh	Esteghlal	32	54	0
Reza Torabian	Pirouzi	26	1	0
Reza Rezaeimanesh	Pirouzi	28	12	0
Farshad Falahatzadeh	Bahman	29	11	0
MIDFIELDERS				
Ali Akbarpour	Esteghlal	23	1	0
Karim Bagheri	Arminia Bielefeld (Ger)	24	38	33
Hamid Estili	Bahman	31	45	6
Mehdi Mahdavikia	Pirouzi	20	25	5
Farhad Majidi	Esteghlal	22	13	2
Ali Mansourian	Esteghlal	26	34	6
Mehrdad Minavand	Pirouzi	22	23	3
Reza Shahroudi	Pirouzi	26	33	5
Sirous Deenmohammadi	Shahrdari Tabriz	29	15	0
FORWARDS				
Khodadad Azizi	Koln (Ger)	26	27	10
Ali Daei	Arminia Bielefeld (Ger)	29	52	38
Sattar Hamedani	Bahman	22	3	0
Ali Mousavi	Pas	24	7	1

Players to watch



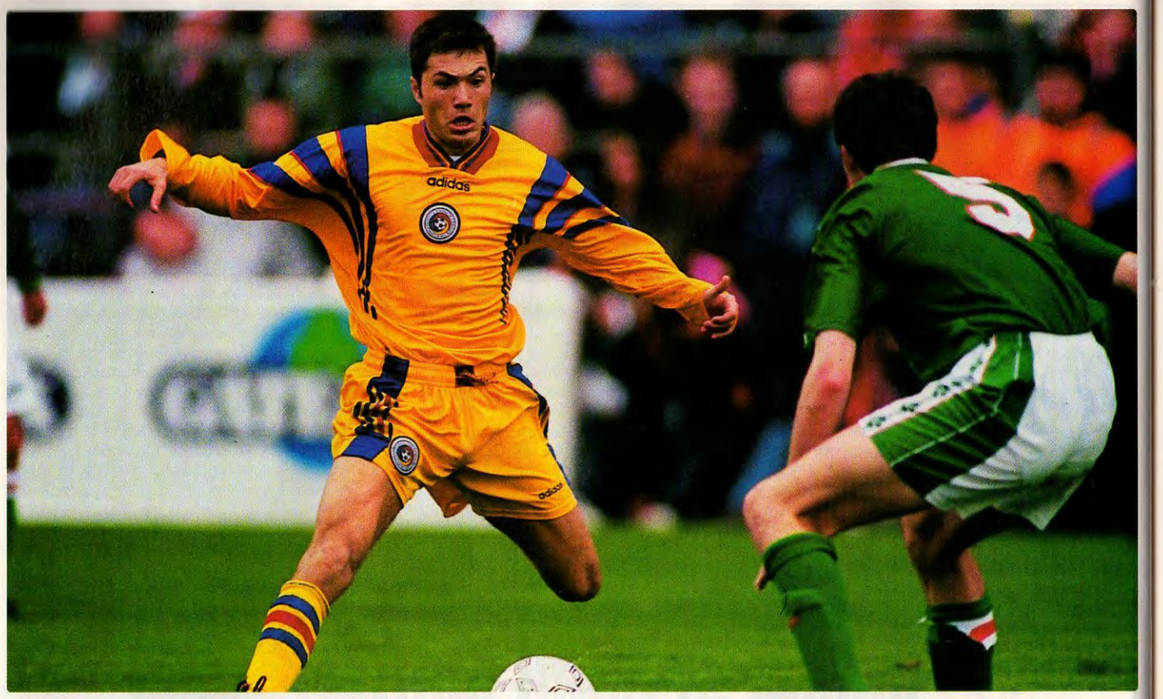
KARIM BAGHERI >
He scored 18 goals in 13 appearances during the qualifying tournament, including seven in the Maldives massacre and the first in the Melbourne match. He was already a hero in Iran, where he played for Pirouzi, before going to Germany to join Arminia Bielefeld. Bagheri's nominal role is in midfield, but his main attributes are speed, ball control and an eye for a chance – just the attributes a top striker needs. Apart from them, all he needs is the ball.

< MEHDI MAHDAVIKIA
International knowledge of Iranian players rarely goes beyond the Bagheri-Daei-Azizi trio, but Mahdavikia should be appreciated much more after the World Cup. He's a quick, all-action midfielder-cum-winger with Pirouzi and has gained 25 caps even though he is still only 20. Mahdavikia is likely to gain plenty of others.

THE VIEW FROM IRAN

Khodadad Azizi

"Getting through the first round is not an impossible dream for us. Germany are the clear favourites to win our group but even they can be caught out by a little Iranian. This season, I've scored for Koln against Bayern Munich and Borussia Dortmund, teams which have several German international defenders. I'm hopeful I'll have more luck against Thomas Helmer and Jurgen Kohler in France."



Goal-getter...Adrian Ilie is part of Romania's potentially lethal strikeforce

Last chance for the old guard

Romanian technique holds the key to their destiny

HOW THEY QUALIFIED

EUROPEAN SECTION, GROUP 8

31.08.96.....Romania-Lithuania.....3-0
09.10.96.....Iceland-Romania.....0-4
14.12.96.....Macedonia-Romania.....0-3
29.03.97.....Romania-Liechtenstein.....8-0
02.04.97.....Lithuania-Romania.....0-1
30.04.97.....Romania-Rep Ireland.....1-0
20.08.97.....Romania-Macedonia.....4-2
06.09.97.....Liechtenstein-Romania.....1-8
10.09.97.....Romania-Iceland.....4-0
11.10.97.....Rep Ireland-Romania.....1-1

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
***Romania**	**10**	**9**	**1**	**0**	**37**	**4**	**28**
Rep Ireland	10	5	3	2	22	8	18
Lithuania	10	5	2	3	11	8	17
FYR Macedonia	10	4	1	5	22	18	13
Iceland	10	2	3	5	11	16	9
Liechtenstein	10	0	0	10	3	52	0

*Romania qualify as group winners

FRANCE 98 will see the end of the old guard in the Romanian national team. Coach Anghel Iordanescu's future is long since signed and sealed and at the tournament's end he leaves to take charge of the Greek national side – a decision which has led to comments being made that his thoughts are elsewhere, rather than in Bucharest. His successor will be 45-year-old Victor Piturca.

This World Cup is also a last fling for the likes of Hagi, Lacatus, Petrescu and probably Gica Popescu. Nevertheless, with players such as Moldovan and Adrian Ilie coming through, Romania should not be under-rated. France suits them as a venue and they should be able to count on considerable local support.

The side's qualifying record speaks for itself, but in their tournament group they could do without a match against England which is likely to be a physical battle and not what the ball-playing artists of the Balkans will fancy in their second outing.

It's a certainty that 'General' Iordanescu will have prepared thoroughly for this encounter, though it is to be hoped it will not be a repeat of the 1970 battle in Mexico. He will have had his spies at Wembley for England's pre-France encounter with Saudi Arabia while his side, having cancelled the planned friendly against British opponents, Northern Ireland, faced home-ties against Paraguay, Moldova and, possibly, Algeria.

Before the aforementioned friendlies in Bucharest, the squad will have spent a week in the Carpathian mountains, and the naming of the final 22 will be left to the latest date possible.

In goal, Salamanca's Stelea is expected to get the nod, although Rapid's highly promising Lobont, as yet uncapped, may be added to the squad.

In the back division, Petrescu, Dobos, Prodan and Selymes are an experienced line-up which Iordanescu will be anxious not to disturb and Petrescu's experience of the English opposition will be invaluable. Similarly, the midfield virtually selects itself and Ilie, Moldovan and Hagi look a more-than-useful attacking force.

Romania's aim is to go further than they did four years ago, and that could mean all the way. The technique is definitely there, and while the veterans will know they won't get another chance, the young bloods are in good form and raring to show what they can do. The two generations should make a powerful mix.

Iordanescu will know how long to give his men, and could even use Lacatus in short spells. In midfield, the 21-year-old Denis Serban may be given his chance – having made his debut perhaps it is time to make him a regular. Up front, Craioveanu is a useful back-up striker.

In fact, there is not a position for which Iordanescu does not have adequate cover. Nevertheless, he will not wish to lose any of his first choices for the battle with the English. By the time that fixture comes around, a very technical match with Colombia will be behind the team and a possible three points already in the bag, with arguably the weakest group opposition to come in the shape of Tunisia.

It will be an enormous disappointment and surprise if the 'Latins of the East' do not qualify for the second phase, and perhaps much more.

Bob Vaughan

FRANCE 98 SCHEDULE

June 15, v Colombia, Lyon
June 22, v England, Toulouse
June 26, v Tunisia, Saint-Denis

QUESTIONS TO THE COACH

'Romanian football is not just about Hagi'

Anghel Iordanescu

● ***What would be a good result for you in France?***
Our first aim is to reach the next round, then we shall see. It also depends on which opponents we'll have to face. Anyway, for us a good result would be to win the World Cup. But for the moment, we won't go that far.

● ***How do you rate your group opponents?***
I've been saying the same thing since the draw took place: it's a very tough round and every team in the group has a great chance of making it to the next round. I wanted to play a strong opponent in the first match and I was satisfied with what I got. After the draw, I realised I didn't know very much about Tunisia, so I sent my assistant Stefanescu to investigate them.

● ***Who are the key men in your squad?***
The same as they were four years ago and eight years ago: Hagi, Gica Popescu and Dan Petrescu.

● ***Who do you think will win the World Cup?***
France, since they are at home and they want to win it badly. Then Brazil, because of their great players, and Germany, because they always know what they want and are used to fighting to win. But saying that, we mustn't forget Argentina either.

● ***Who are the surprise teams to look out for?***
There have been many positive things said about Nigeria, but every time people talk about an African team, they fail. They can't take the pressure.

● ***Who will be the stars of the tournament?***
Ronaldo is looking forward to being crowned the world's best. I don't think there will be enough space for any other players.

● ***You're leaving the Romanian job after the World Cup to move to Greece. Why?***
I've been coaching the Romanian national team since 1993 and I think I'm at the end of the cycle. It's right to get some fresh air. I preferred to take the job as coach of the Greek national team, rather than stay on here for a number of reasons: I played in Greece, so I'm not a complete stranger to the country and I have many friends there. Also, from a professional point of view, the idea of taking the Greeks to the finals of Euro 2000 represents a very alluring challenge.

● ***What do you feel about your replacement, Victor Piturca?***
It's the federation's choice. I have nothing to do with it and I don't intend to make any comment on it. Only time will give us the right answer.

● ***What tactics will you adopt in France?***
Wait and see. Compared to how we have played in the past, there will be some changes.

● ***Your country has many young players. What will you tell them before you leave for the finals?***
I'll tell them to show the world that Romanian football is not just about Hagi. They must follow Adrian Ilie's example. He was an unknown when he moved to Valencia, but he knew how to get respect for himself. France 98 could be a great chance for young stars like Denis Serban, Catalin Munteanu, Lucian Marinescu and goalkeeper Bogdan Lobont to show what they are made of. But it is useless trying to motivate them – that's up to them.

● ***Raducioiu, Lupescu and Vladoiu have all left the national team. Are you upset by their decision?***
It's their decision to make and it has to be respected. I've always called them up to the squad, but they can't pretend that they're still the national team's main players when they aren't even in their own club sides.

Interview: Dominique Antognoni

HOW THEY LINE UP

The stars of USA 94 – Hagi, Petrescu and Popescu – are still prominent, but Ilie and Moldovan are now the main source of goals from a 4-4-2 formation in which Hagi is the main creator. Iordanescu still has the veteran Lacatus on the bench, as well as Dumitrescu, while Gica Popescu's namesake Gabriel is a capable reserve who could yet play a role in midfield, as could the versatile Filipescu.

NAME	CLUB	AGE	CAPS	GLS
GOALKEEPERS				
Florian Prunea	Universitatea Cluj	29	35	0
Dumitru Stingaciu	Kocaelispor (Tur)	33	4	0
Bogdan Stelea	Salamanca (Spa)	30	45	0
DEFENDERS				
Liviu Ciobotariu	National Bucharest	27	2	0
Anton Dobos	AEK Athens (Gre)	32	20	0
Cristian Dulca	Rapid Bucharest	23	3	0
Iulian Filipescu	Galatasaray (Tur)	24	14	0
Dan Petrescu	Chelsea (Eng)	30	66	10
Daniel Prodan	Atletico Madrid (Spa)	26	45	1
Tibor Selymes	Anderlecht (Bel)	28	44	0
MIDFIELDERS				
Constantin Galca	Espanyol (Spa)	26	30	3
Gheorghe Hagi	Galatasaray (Tur)	33	109	32
Lucian Marinescu	Rapid Bucharest	26	3	0
Dorinel Munteanu	Koln (Ger)	29	61	4
Gheorghe 'Gica' Popescu	Galatasaray (Tur)	30	76	13
Gabriel Popescu	Salamanca (Spa)	24	11	1
Ovidiu Stinga	PSV Eindhoven (Hol)	25	18	0
Denis Serban	Steaua Bucharest	21	3	0
FORWARDS				
Gheorghe Craioveanu	Real Sociedad (Spa)	30	17	3
Ilie Dumitrescu	Atlante (Mex)	29	60	3
Adrian Ilie	Valencia (Spa)	24	18	2
Marius Lacatus	Steaua Bucharest	34	80	13
Viorel Moldovan	Coventry City (Eng)	25	22	11
Radu Niculescu	National Bucharest	23	12	2

Players to watch

GHEORGHE HAGI>>
Still the star man after all these years. Deadly at free-kicks, and he remains the team's masterful creator.

ADRIAN ILIE>>
Striker who has made a stunning impact at Spanish club Valencia since his autumn transfer. Romania's best source of goals.

THE VIEW FROM ROMANIA

CARL COHN, journalist and broadcaster

"Romania's strength is the talent of the current generation of players who have been together since well before the 1994 World Cup. Coach Iordanescu is a shrewd tactician and has at his disposal highly skilful performers who can match the Brazilians in their work on the ball and who, on their day, can beat anyone.

"In their captain, Hagi, Romania have a deadly striker who is lethal at set pieces. He will be supported up front by the new forward star Adrian Ilie, who moved to Valencia from Galatasaray in January for just on £7million.

"Also look out for Moldovan, despite his spending most of his time on the bench at Coventry, and Koln's sweet passer of the ball, Munteanu.

"On the down side, Iordanescu's squad has grown old together. Hagi, for example, for all his brilliance, is a veteran who can at best last 70 minutes these days, possibly a little less in a tournament.

"The average age of the defence is now around 30 and France 98 will test the legs of many such as Popescu in midfield, a legend in his own country if not in North London."

Third time lucky…veteran midfielder Freddy Rincon powers his way to his third World Cup finals

HOW THEY QUALIFIED

SOUTH AMERICAN SECTION

24.04.96.....Colombia-Paraguay 1-0
02.06.96.....Peru-Colombia 1-1
07.07.96.....Colombia-Uruguay 3-1
01.09.96.....Colombia-Chile 4-1
09.10.96.....Ecuador-Colombia 0-1
10.11.96.....Bolivia-Colombia 2-2
15.12.96.....Venezuela-Colombia 0-2
12.02.97.....Colombia-Argentina 0-1
02.04.97.....Paraguay-Colombia 2-1
30.04.97.....Colombia-Peru 0-1
08.06.97.....Uruguay-Colombia 1-1
06.07.97.....Chile-Colombia 4-1
20.07.97.....Colombia-Ecuador 1-0
20.08.97.....Colombia-Bolivia 3-0
10.09.97.....Colombia-Venezuela 1-0
16.11.97.....Argentina-Colombia 1-1

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Argentina	16	8	6	2	23	13	30
Paraguay	16	9	2	5	21	14	29
***Colombia**	**16**	**8**	**4**	**4**	**23**	**15**	**28**
Chile	16	7	4	5	32	18	25
Peru	16	7	4	5	19	20	25
Ecuador	16	6	3	7	22	21	21
Uruguay	16	6	3	7	18	21	21
Bolivia	16	4	5	7	18	21	17
Venezuela	16	0	3	13	8	41	3

FRANCE 98 SCHEDULE

June 15
v Romania, Marseille
June 22
v Tunisia, Montpellier
June 26
v England, Lens

A point to prove

Colombia are determined to put the disaster of 1994 behind them

COLOMBIA should do better than they did in the disastrous campaign of 1994, but whether that will be good enough to get them into the second round from a tough group, including England, Romania and Tunisia, is open to doubt.

They are now more experienced in World Cup play and will approach their games more humbly, but the basis of their team is unchanged from 1994, with a number of the squad approaching the veteran stage to say the least.

One reason for possible improvement could be that coach Hernan Dario Gomez – who was assistant to Francisco Maturana in the last two World Cups – puts more importance on results than his predecessor, and is therefore more pragmatic. Colombia still play attractive soccer based on skill with the ball, but they have not added speed to their play, which could be vital.

That said, their slow play can be deceptive. Their attacking midfielders, Carlos Valderrama and Freddy Rincon – together in their third successive tournament at 36 and 31 respectively – are still Colombia's strongest department. They provide excellent service to the attack which they are not afraid to join and, with their long legs, they can speed up, often catching the opposition off guard. Nearly all the play still goes through Valderrama, who is never easy to mark out of a game.

The possible absence of Faustino Asprilla through injury, could be a major blow for the team. The former Newcastle United player, now back with Parma in Italy, was top scorer for Colombia in the qualifying stages, but he has been out of action for some time and although he is confident he will be available, he will not be back to full match fitness.

His absence would seriously harm Colombia's attack. Other experienced players – Victor Aristizabal, Hamilton Ricard and veteran Antony De Avila – are simply not in the same class. Match fitness could also be a problem for some of them. Rincon, Aristizabal and Mauricio Serna, for example, are not currently getting regular games with their clubs.

Gomez, who favours a 4-2-2-2 formation, tried some promising younger players in the warm-up games, and included in his final squad for France is 20-year-old Leider Preciado, who was brought on as a substitute in the 55th minute against Chile in Santiago and scored two goals in four minutes to help Colombia to a draw.

Another significant draw, 0-0, was obtained against Yugoslavia with 10 men, after goalkeeper Oscar Cordoba was sent off 26 minutes into the game for handling outside his area. But the Yugoslavs had had only a day to adjust to Bogota's 2,600-metre altitude. A friendly against fellow World Cup finalists Paraguay, in the USA, was also drawn 1-1.

Training with the full, final squad began at home on May 12, with further games against Scotland in the USA and Germany and Belgium in Europe to come giving, Gomez a further chance to settle on his first-choice side.

Eric Weil

QUESTIONS TO THE COACH

'Fortunately, we're not favourites this time'

Hernan Dario Gomez

● ***What would be a good result for you in France?***
To do better than we did in 1994. The wound that opened then [when Andres Escobar was murdered soon after the defeated team returned home] still has not completely healed. Fortunately, we are not among the favourites this time around, like we were then.

How do you rate your group opponents?
England were not seeded, but they are one of the favourites to win the trophy and they will be very difficult for us to beat. The Romanians beat us in 1994, and beat us well – 3-1, but if we can get a victory over Tunisia then we'll be fighting with Romania for the second place.

● ***Who are your key players this time around?***
Valderrama definitely, Mosquera, Pacheco, and Lozano, among others. People say we are an ageing team, but that's because quite a lot of the players have been going for a long time.

● ***Will there be any surprise successes among the lesser teams?***
Maybe, yes, and if there are they may well be teams who have not played many matches in recent months. What's the use of travelling the world playing friendlies which only serve to get the players into trouble with their clubs? We did that in '94 and arrived at the tournament exhausted. We had played the World Cup before it started and that was one reason why we failed.

● ***Who will be the star players of the tournament?***
I'd like to think that there will be a Colombian or two among them, whoever they are. Everybody has his own opinions.

● ***Not many of your squad play abroad. Is that an advantage?***
Yes. It's much easier for me to keep a check on players when they are in Colombia rather than off in other countries thousands of miles away. For me, the important thing is that the men I have in mind for the squad maintain their form in their home league.

● ***Which country will be the eventual winner?***
Brazil, without much doubt. No other country has so many outstanding players and they haven't even shown their full potential yet. After them, the usual crowd: Argentina, Germany, England, France… My choices aren't very original. Possibly Holland. And Spain… Colombia? That's just wishful thinking. But we really must do better than we did last time.

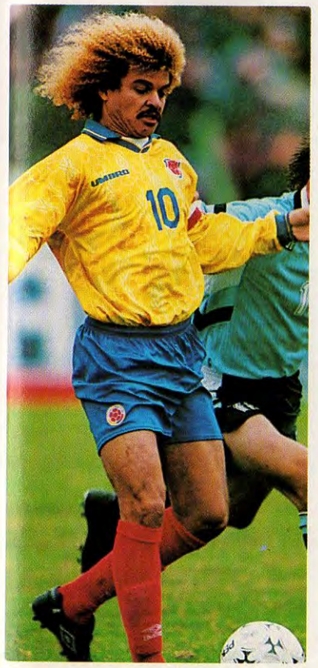
Interview: Eric Weil

HOW THEY LINE UP

Under Hernan Dario Gomez, Colombia are likely to be more pragmatic than the side that flopped in the USA. Bermudez holds the back four together while midfielders Gaviria and Serna sit in front of the defence, protecting the rearguard when Valderrama and Rincon stroll forward, which is most of the time. Faustino Asprilla will start in France even if he is not fully fit, with Aristizabal, De Avila and new wonderboy Preciado vying for the second striking berth.

NAME	CLUB	AGE	CAPS	GLS
GOALKEEPERS				
Farid Mondragon	Independiente (Arg)	26	22	0
Oscar Cordoba	America	28	47	0
Miguel Calero	Atletico Nacional	27	9	0
DEFENDERS				
Jorge Bermudez	Boca Juniors (Arg)	28	42	3
Alexis Mendoza	Veracruz	36	67	2
Wilmer Cabrera	Millonarios	30	40	2
Ivan Cordoba	San Lorenzo	21	9	0
Evert Palacios	Deportivo Cali	29	5	0
Hugo Galeano	Atletico Junior	27	15	0
Francisco Mosquero	Atletico Nacional	24	1	0
Jose Santa	Atletico Nacional	27	23	0
Wilson Perez	Unicosta	30	39	0
MIDFIELDERS				
Mauricio Serna	Boca Juniors (Arg)	30	37	2
Andres Estrada	Deportivo Cali	30	15	0
Carlos Valderrama	Miami Fusion (USA)	36	105	10
Freddy Rincon	Corinthians (Bra)	31	73	16
Harold Lozano	Valladolid (Spa)	26	30	3
Herman Gaviria	Atletico Nacional	28	22	3
Neider Morantes	Atletico Nacional	22	7	2
Victor Pacheco	Atletico Junior	24	11	0
FORWARDS				
Faustino Asprilla	Parma (Ita)	28	38	15
Victor Aristizabal	Sao Paulo (Bra)	26	40	5
Hamilton Ricard	Middlesbrough (Eng)	23	17	5
Antony de Avila	Metrostars (USA)	34	61	16
Leidar Preciado	Sante Fe	20	1	2

Players to watch



<<CARLOS VALDERRAMA
Still the master after all these years. Nearly all the team's play passes through him. Often strolls around the pitch at walking pace these days but his positional play and distribution are still excellent.

<JORGE BERMUDEZ
Defender who has been in great form for Boca Juniors this season and will definitely be one to watch.

THE VIEW FROM COLOMBIA

Faustino Asprilla

"Our poor performance four years ago is likely to stand us in good stead this year. In the USA, we were among the favourites, but went out in the first round. That bad experience left something good.

"We are now less anxious than four years ago. I don't think we can play as poorly again as in the United States. We may not qualify for the second round, but we will try to leave a good image. England are a favourite to win the Cup. All their players are good and we will have to watch Alan Shearer, who I played with at Newcastle. Romania beat us in 1994 and they have lots of good players, while Tunisia will be a mystery to us. It's not going to be easy."

ENGLAND AWAY SHIRT.

FRANCE '98

THE ORIGINAL
Ben Sherman

Spine-tingler...battling Paul Ince (right) is a vital player for Glenn Hoddle

HOW THEY QUALIFIED

EUROPEAN SECTION, GROUP 2

01.09.96.....Moldova-England.....0-3
09.10.96.....England-Poland.....2-1
09.11.96.....Georgia-England.....0-2
12.02.97.....England-Italy.....0-1
30.04.97.....England-Georgia.....2-0
31.05.97.....Poland-England.....0-2
10.09.97.....England-Moldova.....4-0
11.10.97.....Italy-England.....0-0

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
***England**	**8**	**6**	**1**	**1**	**15**	**2**	**19**
Italy	8	5	3	0	11	1	18
Poland	8	3	1	4	10	12	10
Georgia	8	3	1	4	7	9	10
Moldova	8	0	0	8	2	21	0

*England qualify for finals

Hoddle faces test of strength

Outside the starting 11, the England squad is short on quality

THERE WAS always going to be a downside to the high expectations generated by England's successful qualification for France 98 – and national coach Glenn Hoddle has been experiencing it in the past few months.

Recent friendlies and off-the-pitch events have brought England back to earth following the goalless draw in Rome which enabled England to qualify automatically for France 98 at the expense of Italy. Defeat by Chile, a listless draw in Switzerland and a somewhat fortunate victory over Portugal have dampened some of the inevitable enthusiasm.

Hoddle was not overtly upset by these results – he was without many key players – but the revelation of faith healer Eileen Drewery's close association with his squad was not part of the planned preparations. The use of a healer is not in itself cause for concern – Hoddle's one-time mentor Arsene Wenger has steered Arsenal to success by using a holistic approach to football – but Drewery's appetite for self-publicity should set alarm bells ringing.

A 30-strong squad (reduced to 22 on June 2) was named for the final warm-up matches against Saudi Arabia, Belgium and Morocco. There were recalls for the injury-prone Darren Anderton and Les Ferdinand, but there was no room for Matthew Le Tissier, nor Premiership top scorer Andy Cole.

On paper, England have a strong starting 11, but there will be at least six other finalists with better all-round squads. In midfield, there is little strength in depth. Paul Gascoigne will be the major creative source – but he is seen by many as an accident waiting to happen. Paul Scholes could be the man to fill Gazza's boots, but will he be given the opportunity? The same goes for David Beckham.

With or without Gascoigne, so much depends on Alan Shearer. The furore over the England captain's 'kick' at Leicester's Neil Lennon (and his scandalous reprieve by the FA) will be quickly forgotten if Shearer carries on in France where he left off against the Portuguese. At Wembley in April, Shearer's superbly taken goals helped to disguise defensive deficiencies which would have been exposed by teams with more of an attacking edge than Portugal, such as Croatia or Argentina, England's likely second-round opponents.

Shearer will probably be partnered by Teddy Sheringham, who has not had the best of seasons with Manchester United and may eventually give way to the precocious talent of Michael Owen. Beyond that, the striking options are Ferdinand and Ian Wright, both with fitness doubts, and Dion Dublin, who is still an international novice. Ironically, the injury which kept Shearer out for most of the season may now work in England's favour. After a long, hard English season, the likes of Shearer, Seaman and Keown (also injured in the autumn) will be fresher than most.

Whether England can live up to the razzmatazz now expected by the sponsors – there is an official England supermarket, and even an official washing powder – is open to question. The quarter-finals are a realistic aim for Hoddle's men – anything more will be a bonus, anything less will be a disappointment.

Gavin Hamilton

FRANCE 98 SCHEDULE

June 15
v Tunisia, Marseille
June 22
v Romania, Toulouse
June 26
v Colombia, Lens

QUESTIONS TO THE COACH

'Second place is not good enough'

Glenn Hoddle

● ***What are England's chances of success in France?***
We will go to the World Cup as one of the half-dozen teams with a genuine chance of going all the way – and that is a nice position to be in. England are geared to coming first. Second is not good to me. I'm not saying we are going to win but that is the aim.

● ***Are you pleased with the progress England have made in recent years?***
We are a long way down the line in building a team capable of competing with the very best but we cannot get carried away by what has happened so far. What I would say is that there is genuine optimism in the camp. That brings pressure, but it's the sort I don't mind dealing with. It is far better than going to France feeling we are just making up the numbers and being happy at the idea we might reach the quarter-finals or semi-finals.

● ***How do you rate your group opponents?***
It could have been a lot harder, it could have been a lot easier. We would hope we can qualify. Romania are a good team on their day and Tunisia and Colombia cannot be underestimated. This is the nice part of the World Cup, learning about your opponents. But there are always dangers around the corner.

● ***Who are your favourites to win the World Cup?***
Italy, Germany and Argentina – and England can be up there with them. Why not?

● ***Will there be any surprise teams?***
Yugoslavia look to be a decent side. They're very well-organised but still possess flair and creativity.

● ***Who are your key players?***
The spine of the team – Seaman, Adams, Ince, Shearer – is terrific.

● ***Why will Alan Shearer be your captain?***
At international level you want someone who the opposition look up to leading your team. That might be what Alan Shearer has ahead of the rest at the moment.

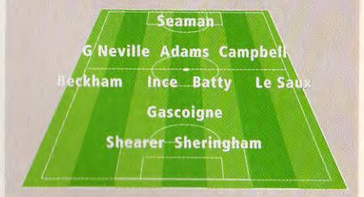
● ***Has winning Le Tournoi been an advantage in the run-up to the World Cup?***
To win it was a wonderful achievement, but if we'd beaten Brazil as well then everybody's expectations would have been sky-high. The fact that we lost that game kept our feet on the ground and ensures we know there is something still to aim at, improvements to be made.

● ***Did you ever think England would not qualify?***
I never felt uncomfortable until that Christian Vieri header went just past our post right at the end of the Rome game. John Gorman [Hoddle's assistant coach] will tell you he thought it was going wide, but from where I was sitting, that looked in. Your emotions were wrenched from one extreme to the other in the space of 30 seconds. It was a heart-stopping moment. But even after Italy beat us at Wembley I always said we could still win the group and I wouldn't have predicted that if I did not think it was possible.

● ***Are you satisfied with your preparations for France?***
I have been to a World Cup before and there were things in 1982 and 1986 that I wish had been done differently. I now have got the chance to put that right. Other teams have played twice the number of preparation games that we have. That may be a sign that their federations are putting international football first and it goes without saying that I feel we can learn from their example. Our domestic clubs have had foreign players going away to play for their countries. We should look at the sort of preparations our World Cup rivals have been having.

Interview: Keir Radnedge

HOW THEY LINE UP



Glenn Hoddle rarely deviates from a three-man central defence with wing-backs. Seaman is the undisputed first-choice in goal. Keown may force his way in at centre-back after an excellent second half of the season with Arsenal. One of the Neville brothers could replace Beckham at right wing-back if he moves infield. Batty and Ince play the holding role, but one may give way for a more attack-minded midfielder. Gascoigne will start in the attacking central midfield role, but is unlikely to finish any matches. Owen's pace makes him most effective as a substitute.

NAME	CLUB	AGE	CAPS	GLS
GOALKEEPERS				
David Seaman	Arsenal	34	39	0
Nigel Martyn	Leeds United	31	6	0
Tim Flowers	Blackburn Rovers	31	10	0
DEFENDERS				
Gary Neville	Manchester Utd	23	25	0
Philip Neville	Manchester Utd	21	10	0
Gareth Southgate	Aston Villa	27	23	0
Martin Keown	Arsenal	31	17	0
Tony Adams	Arsenal	31	50	4
Andy Hinchcliffe	Sheffield Wednesday	29	5	0
Sol Campbell	Tottenham Hotspur	23	14	1
Graeme Le Saux	Chelsea	29	23	1
MIDFIELDERS				
Paul Ince	Liverpool	30	38	2
Nicky Butt	Manchester United	23	5	0
Paul Gascoigne	Middlesbrough	31	54	10
David Beckham	Manchester United	23	13	0
Robert Lee	Newcastle United	31	16	2
David Batty	Newcastle United	29	30	0
Paul Merson	Middlesbrough	30	17	2
Steve McManaman	Liverpool	26	20	0
FORWARDS				
Alan Shearer	Newcastle United	27	38	18
Teddy Sheringham	Manchester United	32	32	9
Paul Scholes	Manchester United	23	6	3
Ian Wright	Arsenal	34	29	9
Michael Owen	Liverpool	18	3	0

Players to watch

PAUL SCHOLES Young attacker with a big-match temperament – and ability to match.

ALAN SHEARER> England's talisman on whose goals so much depends.

THE VIEW FROM ENGLAND

Patrick Barclay, Sunday Telegraph

"England's main strength is that they are a hard team to play against. Their away results have been excellent. When it comes to taking teams on and counter-attacking, England are one of the best teams in the world. The panic after the defeat against Chile was a little premature. At Wembley they feel the pressure to go out and play.

"My main reservation is that both Hoddle and Manchester United are not getting the best out of David Beckham by playing him wide on the right. He's our trump card, the best player we can count on apart from Alan Shearer. Short of playing him in goal, we could not really find more of a bush to hide him under. The fact that Scholes is also an option contradicts the view that it is just the spine of the side that is strong. There is also a doubt over whether Hoddle needs to play Ince with Batty. But then the other team to play with two holding midfielders is Brazil.

"The whole healing business is silly but if England win the World Cup it will be forgotten. It's totally mad, but it will make things more interesting!"

Where there's hope...Esperance defender Badra (right) in action

On a whim and a prayer

Safety first as the Tunisians aim to avoid embarrassment

TUNISIA set off for France on their World Cup adventure via Italy and Austria. Two training camps, the first in Castelfranco, and the second in the altitude of Albertville were designed by coach Henry Kasperczak to give his motley crew as much of a chance as possible in Group G, where they have a near-impossible assignment against Colombia, England and Romania.

Kasperczak, who has also been doing some nervous reshuffling as the team's mediocre run of results continue, will have matches against Vicenza, a Montelimar regional selection in France, Austria, Chile and Wales to continue his toning of the players.

Frankly, Tunisia have not got a chance but there is growing confidence in the small north African nation that their side could spring a shock of two. There has been, of course, little evidence to support this, particularly the way they played in their last home friendly against Georgia.

It took a 80th-minute equaliser from Imed Ben Younes to eran a draw after Georgi Kinkladze had put Georgia on course for a rare away win. Ben Younes is fast emerging as the candidate to cure Kasperczak's biggest headache – the search for a striker. He seems to have decided against his experiment with veteran Ziad Tlemcani and has to do without injured Hassan Gabsi, by far Tunisia's best player at a disappointing African Nations Cup finals performance in Burkina Faso in February.

Kasperczak also went to Spain to run his eye over Adel Sellimi, who was Tunisia's top goalscorer in the World Cup qualifiers and on the books of Nantes before being loaned to Jaen in the Spanish Second Division. The move, said Kasperczak, as well as Sellimi's omission from the Nations Cup squad, has left Sellimi dejected and demotivated but there are still signs that the coach will attempt to re-incorporate the striker into his squad for France.

Also back is goalkeeper, and former captain, Chokri El Ouaer who could take the number one jersey from Ali Boumnijel, the reserve at Bastia in France. El Ouaer and Boumnijel are both prone to the most disastrous of mistakes and World Cup opponents will be well advised that long-range shooting has a higher percentage success rate against the Tunisians than most.

A newcomer in the squad since Burkina Faso will be Brazilian left back Jose Clayton, who was given his citizenship in April after having spent the past five years with Etoile Sahel. Kasperczak was pleased with his performance on debut against Georgia. Hamdi Marzouki and Mourad Melki are the other new call-ups after good showings in the Tunisian Cup Final. Marzouki was on the winning team with Club Africain while Melki lost with Olympique de Beja.

There might still be last chance for Maronene Gueznir, who plays with Zoubier Beya and Medhi Ben Slimane at Freiburg in the German Second Division. Gueznir, unlike the other two, has spent most of his career in Germany and hence not had much national team exposure.

Mark Gleeson

HOW THEY QUALIFIED

AFRICAN SECTION, FIRST ROUND

02.06.96 ....Rwanda-Tunisia 1-3
16.06.96 ....Tunisia-Rwanda 2-0
Tunisia win 5-1 on agg

SECOND ROUND, GROUP 2

10.11.96.....Liberia-Tunisia.....0-1
12.01.97.....Tunisia-Egypt 1-0
06.04.97.....Namibia-Tunisia 1-2
27.04.97.....Tunisia-Liberia.....2-0
08.06.97.....Egypt-Tunisia 0-0
17.08.97.....Tunisia-Namibia 4-0

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
*Tunisia	6	5	1	0	10	1	16
Egypt	6	3	1	2	15	5	10
Liberia	6	1	1	4	2	10	4
Namibia	6	1	1	4	6	17	4

*Tunisia qualify as group winners

FRANCE 98 SCHEDULE

June 15,
v England, Marseille
June 22,
v Colombia, Montpellier
June 26,
v Romania, Saint-Denis

QUESTIONS TO THE COACH

'Watch out for surprises – from Nigeria and Yugoslavia'

Henryk Kasperczak

● ***What target have you set your team for the finals?***
Get as far as you can. If you don't believe in yourself, you shouldn't be at the World Cup.

● ***Who are your favourites to win?***
I don't like to make predictions, but I feel that Nigeria could go a long way, although they'll stop short of winning it because they lack experience at the highest level, which you need in a World Cup.

● ***Who will be the revelation of the finals?***
I fancy Yugoslavia that will be the dark horse. They have some wonderfully gifted players.

● ***Who are the key players in your squad?***
None of them. Our players are unknown to the world at large. But we're not from black Africa, so the heat will not help us as much as some people claim. Anyway, I doubt if it will be as hot in June as people say.

● ***What technical/tactical developments should we expect to see?***
There has been a huge evolution in footballing tactics in recent years. Nowadays most teams play with only three defenders and five midfielders who can go forward. We'll see a lot of that.

● ***How will the tournament's new size and structure affect your preparations?***
I know there has been a lot of criticism of the extra travelling, but going to different venues to play does not bother us at all.

● ***How do you rate your group opponents?***
Colombia can beat anybody, on their day, but they are vulnerable as well. Romania have a lot of good players getting experience with a variety of clubs, and England have come on well. They don't play so much long-ball stuff under Hoddle. He was technically superb when he played for Monaco, and is injecting some of that into the national side.

● ***You did not do very well in the African Nations Cup. How will this affect your performance in France?***
We were very disappointed not to do better. Mind you, we only lost on penalties in the quarter-final.

● ***Will an African country ever stage a World Cup?***
The more African nations do well in this and future tournaments, the better it will be for the African game. But we'll have to wait and see.

● ***France is only 'just across the water' from Tunisia. Will playing the World Cup in France be beneficial to you?***
Yes – we should have quite a lot of supporters. But I expect the English to outnumber us in Marseille.

Interview: Andrew Warshaw

HOW THEY LINE UP

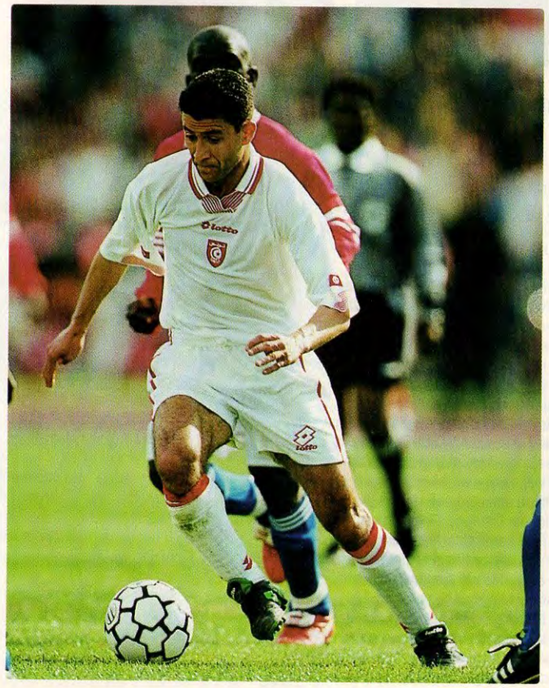
The absence through injury of Hassen Gabsi is a major loss, leaving even more pressure on Beya who is Beya is the key as the playmaker. Chubby little winger Ben Slimane is a dangerous option on the flanks, alongside striker Bern Younes. The defence is flat-footed and easy to prise open, despite the recent arrival of Brazilian-born defender Jose Clayton.

NAME	CLUB	AGE	CAPS	GLS
GOALKEEPERS				
Chokri El Ouaer	Esperance	31	49	0
Radhouane Salhi	Etoile Sahel	30	5	0
Ali Boumnijel	Bastia (Fra)	32	11	0
DEFENDERS				
Tarek Thabet	Esperance	36	42	1
Sami Trabelsi	CS Sfaxien	30	42	3
Khaled Badra	Esperance	25	24	2
Ferid Chouchane	Esperance	25	23	0
Sabri Jaballah	Club Africain	24	17	0
Mounir Boukadida	Esperance	30	27	0
Jose Clayton	Esperance	25	0	0
MIDFIELDERS				
Zoubier Beya	Freiburg (Ger)	26	41	9
Kaies Ghodbane	Esperance	22	43	1
Strajeddine Chihi	Esperance	28	44	4
Riadh Bouazizi	Esperance	25	23	0
Sofiane Fekih	CS Sfaxien	28	29	29
Skander Souayah	CS Sfaxien	25	28	0
Maher Zdiri	Club Africain	27	10	0
STRIKERS				
Mehdi Bel Slimane	Freiburg (Ger)	24	30	5
Riadh Jelassi	Esperance	26	12	3
Imed Ben Younes	Etole Sahel	23	7	3
Adel Sellimi	Nantes (Fra)	26	52	12
Faoissi Rouissi	Club Africain	26	40	14

Players to watch

ZOUBIER BEYA >
Much has been written and said about the prowess and key role of Zoubier Beya, but he is truly the only real exciting option for the Tunisians. A great season in Germany has been a bit tempered by a fall-out with coach Kasperczak in Burkina Faso

JOSE CLAYTON
One to watch: 24-year-old Jose Clayton has tasted considerable success in African cup competition with Etoile Sahel in the last five years. Now the Brazilian-born defender gets to represent the continent at the World Cup finals.



THE VIEW FROM TUNISIA

TAREK DHIAB, former African Footballer of the Year

"We were given a very tough draw and it will be a lot more difficult than it was for us in Argentina in 1978. I am just hoping that Tunisia can at least win a game or take some points off the other teams. They also need to get the harmony back in the side.

"We have some creative players like Beya who can make things happen and torment the opposition. The team have also played together for a long time and are consistent.

"There are many things that need to be worked on. We are still missing a striker and a strong leader in the defence. Goals has been a problem as we have seen in all of the recent games. But the World Cup is a one-off tournament with 11 men against 11 and that means a chance for anybody."

All together...Will it be all smiles for a confident Argentina in France?

HOW THEY QUALIFIED

SOUTH AMERICAN SECTION

24.04.96.....Argentina-Bolivia.....3-1
02.06.96.....Ecuador-Argentina 2-0
07.07.96.....Peru-Argentina 0-0
01.09.96.....Argentina-Paraguay.....1-1
09.10.96.....Venezuela-Argentina 2-5
15.12.96.....Argentina-Chile.....1-1
12.01.97.....Uruguay-Argentina 0-0
12.02.97.....Colombia-Argentina.....0-1
02.04.97.....Bolivia-Argentina.....2-1
30.04.97.....Argentina-Ecuador 2-1
08.06.97.....Argentina-Peru 2-0
06.07.97.....Paraguay-Argentina.....1-2
20.07.97.....Argentina-Venezuela 2-0
10.09.97.....Chile-Argentina.....1-2
12.10.97.....Argentina-Uruguay 0-0
16.11.97.....Argentina-Colombia.....1-1

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
***Argentina**	**16**	**8**	**6**	**2**	**23**	**13**	**30**
Paraguay	16	9	2	5	21	14	29
Colombia	16	8	4	4	23	15	28
Chile	16	7	4	5	32	18	25
Peru	16	7	4	5	19	20	25
Ecuador	16	6	3	7	22	21	21
Uruguay	16	6	3	7	18	21	21
Bolivia	16	4	5	7	18	21	17
Venezuela	16	0	3	13	8	41	3

*Argentina qualify as group winners

FRANCE 98 SCHEDULE

June 14 v Japan, Toulouse
June 21 v Jamaica, Paris
June 26 v Croatia, Bordeaux

Full of confidence

Victory over Brazil is just the right tonic for Diego's successors

ARGENTINA will be playing their first World Cup in four without Diego Maradona, on whom the team relied so often. On the other hand, they will have several players based with European clubs, so they should be at no disadvantage against European teams.

Warm-up matches are not often to be taken seriously, but any encounter between Brazil and Argentina is always a serious affair. No wonder then that Argentina's 1-0 victory over the World Cup holders at Maracana – their first win on Brazilian soil in 28 years – has given the players tremendous confidence.

A surprise 2-1 defeat in Israel, where Argentina opened their pre-World Cup tour for the fourth time running, was forgotten.

In 1986, Argentina found goals difficult to get until they thrashed Israel 7-2 in a pre-World Cup friendly, and they went on to win the trophy. They played Israel again in 1990 and reached the Final. Four years later they tried it again, won 3-0, but failed to finish among the medals in the USA. This time they lost to Israel for the first time. Does it mean anything?

Argentina find it difficult to penetrate and score against defensive set-ups, even when they have more of the ball. This was the case against Israel. Generally Argentina lacked surprise tactics, and are not happy when pressed.

There has been little understanding between the main strikers, Gabriel Batistuta, Hernan Crespo and Claudio Lopez – any combination of two – although their ball-playing attacking midfielders, usually Juan Sebastian Veron, Ariel Ortega and Marcelo Gallardo (one of the few home-based stars) create ample chances. They are best on the counter-attack.

Obviously there is a problem of understanding when in attack because the team have so many potential scorers who have done well in this department with their European clubs, led by Batistuta, the national team's leading scorer with 37 goals. It may be solved with regular pre-World Cup training together, which started on May 11.

Another question mark hangs over coach Daniel Passarella's recent introduction of a three-men defensive line, which proved successful in the last five qualifying games and against Brazil's dangerous forwards, but is still thought to be a bit risky. Passarella has not openly made a decision, but his hand may be forced.

Stalwart flank defender Jose Chamot was injured again in an Italian League match at the end of April. This put him out for a month and gave him little time to get fit before the start of the World Cup. Crespo, also hurt in Italy, is more likely to be fit.

Apart from Brazil, Argentina faced some rather weak teams in their run-up, so that this year's 5-0-1 record up to the end of April does not mean much, but there may be few more skillful teams in the finals and, when they get going as a team, they should be a handful for anybody.

They should reach the second round from Group H, against Japan, Jamaica and Croatia, and after that they should have as good a chance as anybody.

Eric Weil

QUESTIONS TO THE COACH

'Anyone from ten can win the World Cup'

Daniel Passarella

What would be a good result for your team in France?
To win the World Cup by playing good football, with the players being protected from rough play. Anything else will be a disappointment. We beat Brazil earlier this year, but we've won nothing yet. Just a friendly.

How do you rate your group opponents?
We respect all three of them, but do not fear them. World Cups are full of surprises, so we can't be complacent. But obviously we should get enough points to go through to the next round.

Who are your key players?
Batistuta, Veron, Almeyda, Sensini, Ortega – though he has been a bit below form recently – and Chamot, although he may be ruled out because of injury.

Who will win the tournament?
Any one from ten – ourselves, Germany, France, Italy, Brazil, England, Spain, possibly Holland. I also believe an African team might be capable of winning it, and I'm sure there will be a surprise team who nobody picked to do especially well before the tournament started.

Who will be the star players?
The top men from the top teams will be the ones to watch.

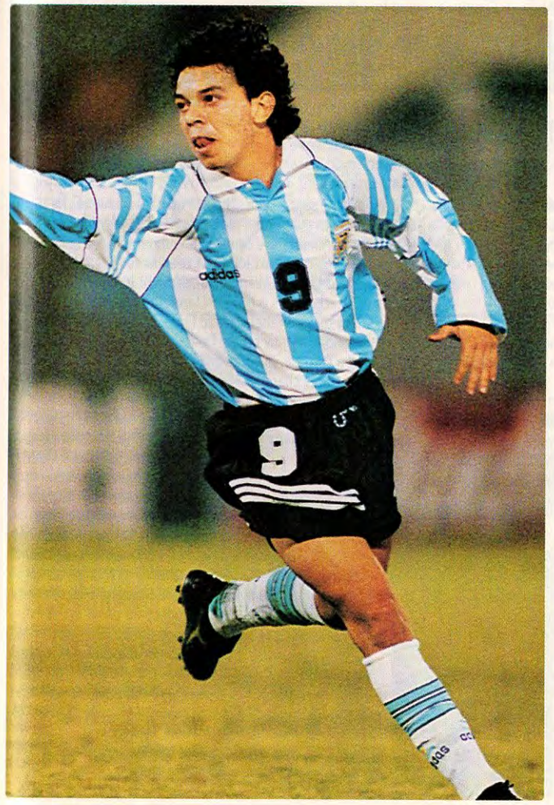
Do you expect to see any tactical novelties at this World Cup?
There are unlikely to be any startling new tactics. Teams will adapt what they do according to what their opponents do. We used three defenders in our final games in the qualifying competition, and this tactic is growing in popularity. But ideally I would like to play as we did in the Atlanta Olympics – mostly 4-3-1-2.

HOW THEY LINE UP

Passarella is still undecided on his defensive formation. He used three defenders in Argentina's final qualifying games, but may play safe and opt for a zonal back four in the opening group games, assuming centre-back Jose Chamot is fit. Ortega is the man who makes it all happen in attack, playing in front of Veron and Simeone. Gallardo, Zanetti and Almeyda will all see action at some stage in midfield. Up front, Lopez and Crespo vie for the second striker spot alongside captain Batistuta, while the veteran Caniggia is unlikely to see much action.

NAME	CLUB	AGE	CAPS	GLS
GOALKEEPERS				
Carlos Roa	Mallorca (Spa)	28	7	0
German Adrian Burgos	River Plate	29	10	0
Pablo Cavallero	Velez Sarsfield	24	3	0
DEFENDERS				
Nestor Sensini	Parma (Ita)	31	48	0
Pablo Paz	Tenerife (Spa)	25	11	1
Roberto Ayala	Napoli (Ita)	25	37	1
Nelson Vivas	Lugano (Swi)	28	11	1
Jose Chamot	Lazio (Ita)	29	35	2
Hector Pineda	Udinese (Ita)	30	11	0
Hernan Diaz	River Plate	33	27	3
Javier Zanetti	Internazionale (Ita)	24	30	1
MIDFIELDERS				
Diego Simeone	Internazionale (Ita)	28	64	10
Matias Almeyda	Lazio (Ita)	24	14	0
Juan Sebastian Veron	Sampdoria (Ita)	23	15	1
Christian Bassedas	Velez Sarsfield	25	18	0
Leonardo Astrada	River Plate	28	30	0
Marcelo Gallardo	River Plate	23	22	10
Sergio Berti	River Plate	29	18	3
Ariel Ortega	Valencia (Spa)	24	44	8
Marcelo Escudero	River Plate	25	9	0
Rodolfo Cardoso	Boca Juniors	29	4	0
Diego Cagna	Boca Juniors	28	9	0
FORWARDS				
Gabriel Batistuta	Fiorentina (Ita)	29	56	38
Claudio Lopez	Valencia (Spa)	23	20	3
Hernan Crespo	Parma (Ita)	22	15	6
Abel Balbo	Roma (Ita)	32	30	11
Claudio Caniggia	Boca Juniors	31	52	15

Players to watch



ARIEL ORTEGA
Star man. His form has dipped in recent months but he is still the player most worthy of the 'New Maradona' tag. Possesses outstanding ball control, playmaking skills and a deadly eye for goal.

< MARCELO GALLARDO
Definitely one to watch. The brightest of the current crop of young home-based players. A midfielder who may not make the starting line-up, but is bound to see action at some stage.

THE VIEW FROM ARGENTINA

CARLOS BIANCHI, successful club coach

"There are all sorts of defensive systems in Europe, where I coached Roma last season, but the four-men line is still the most successful. France and Spain, who employ it, are my favourites, with Argentina.

"Our players have an amazing capacity to adapt themselves to any system, but if we have three defenders, we must have fast players able to cross over and concentrate. Otherwise there will be a lot of spaces for opponents.

"The top players usually come from the winning team. If it's Argentina, Ortega and Veron may well stand out."

Fighting spirit...Hidetoshi Nakata battles his way through against South Korea in the April friendly

Okada banks on his boys

The coach looks to youth to see Japan through

TAKESHI OKADA is keeping mum on his final squad until the June 2 deadline. Even the Japanese players will not know whether they are in (or out) for sure until then.

Coach Okada, however, announced a squad of 25 for the pre-France Kirin Cup matches with Paraguay and the Czech Republic, and intended to take these same 25 with him for pre-World Cup training and matches with Mexico (May 31) and Yugoslavia (June 3) in Lausanne, Switzerland. Barring injury, Okada says that the players he will use in France are all in the Kirin Cup party.

The squad contains few surprises other than those concerning players from Shimizu S-Pulse. Midfielder Teruyoshi Ito is one. He scored the winner against Brazil at the 1996 Olympic Games, is a nimble midfielder and is having a great season at S-Pulse, who are now looking like title challengers. He has played for the national team once, against Group H opponents Croatia last year, when Japan won 4-3.

"Ito is a very balanced, hard-working player," says Okada, "with above average technique in both defence and attack."

His 18-year-old team-mate Daisuke Ichikawa is also in, at right-back, as is centre-half Toshihide Saito. "He was on the bench all through the qualifiers, and that isn't good for a player," says Okada. "Now he has got his feel back for the game, and is even better."

There has been plenty of speculation about who will lead the attack, but Masashi Nakayama of Jubilo Iwata staked an indisputable claim just before the squad was announced by scoring 16 goals in four J.League games (5,4,4,3). "I hope he hasn't used up his supply for the season," says Okada.

Kazuyoshi Miura, of Verdy Kawasaki, also returns after being dropped for the game with South Korea in April. "It's not just how he plays," says Okada. "It's his global experience. He's the only player with that, and a player who does everything for the team, not for himself. We cannot do without him." The fact that Kazu and Verdy Kawasaki top the J.League has helped.

Okada also selected Wagner Lopes, Shoji Jo and Masayuki Okano in attack. Lopes is back on form after a pre-season injury but Jo, a key player in the Olympic team, is struggling to regain fitness. Okano, currently on the bench at Urawa Reds, might be considered a surprise, but that is how Okada intends to use him. "He has very little chance of making the starting line-up," says Okada, "but I want him for changing the flow of the game."

Okada clearly is looking at a fast counter-attacking game, and Okano is about as quick as they come. The captain has not been named, but Okada is in no doubt about the team's leader: Masami Ihara, the most capped player in Japanese football.

Certain question marks remain. Is goalkeeper Yoshikatsu Kawaguchi too young at 22? Would any other manager take two 22-year-old keepers to the finals? Okada also has included Shinji Ono, 18, of Urawa Reds, besides 18-year-old Ichikawa.

The fact that Japan have so many promising youngsters coming through provides evidence of the J.League's success. Japan are good enough already to produce an upset in France, and the signs are they will be stronger in 2002.

Mike Plastow & Michi Ishijima

HOW THEY QUALIFIED

ASIA SECTION – FIRST ROUND, GROUP 4

23.03.97 .....Oman-Japan.....0-1
25.03.97 .....Macao-Japan 0-10
27.03.97 .....Nepal-Japan.....0-6
22.06.97 .....Japan-Macao 10-0
25.06.97 .....Japan-Nepal.....3-0
28.06.97 .....Japan-Oman.....1-1

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
***Japan**	**6**	**5**	**1**	**0**	**31**	**1**	**16**
Oman	6	4	1	1	14	2	13
Nepal	6	1	1	4	3	28	4
Macao	6	0	1	5	2	19	1

*Japan qualify for second round

SECOND ROUND, GROUP B

07.09.97 .....Japan-Uzbekistan.....6-3
19.09.97 .....UAE-Japan 0-0
28.09.97 .....Japan-South Korea.....1-2
04.10.97 .....Kazakhstan-Japan.....1-1
11.10.97 .....Uzbekistan-Japan.....1-1
26.10.97 .....Japan-UAE.....1-1
01.11.97 .....South Korea-Japan.....0-2
08.11.97 .....Japan-Kazakhstan.....5-1

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
South Korea	8	6	1	1	19	7	19
***Japan**	**8**	**3**	**4**	**1**	**17**	**9**	**13**
UAE	8	2	3	3	9	12	9
Uzbekistan	8	1	3	4	13	18	6
Kazakhstan	8	1	3	4	7	19	6

*Japan enter play-off

PLAY-OFF (IN MALAYSIA)

16.11.97 .....Japan-Iran.....3-2
Japan win by golden goal & qualify for finals

FRANCE 98 SCHEDULE

June 14, v Argentina, Toulouse
June 20, v Croatia, Nantes
June 26, v Jamaica, Lyon

QUESTIONS TO THE COACH

'I want to show we can play team football'

Takeshi Okada

This is Japan's first appearance in the finals. What kind of football can we expect from you?
Individually, my players can't stand comparison with some of their opponents, but I want to show the world we can play team football. We play our own, systematic game. It isn't like the football of other countries, and the most important thing now is to play without fear. The global level is different from what we know in Asia, but the pitch is the same and we're all human. We mustn't be overawed. The target is one win, one draw and one loss, but that isn't a promise and I'd like better.

The world has known about Kazu Miura for some time, and it's now learning about Hidetoshi Nakata, too. Are these your key players?
I don't single out individuals. We have many good players, both veterans and youngsters, and I have been trying to give everybody a fair chance.

You have called up several young players this year, including Shinji Ono and Daisuke Ichikawa. How do they feature in your plans.
I chose them not because of their potential, but to use now. Ono's first-touch passing and shooting are well suited to a counter-attacking game. Ichikawa is still at school and has to fit in J.League games between classes, so he isn't in top condition, but even now he is good enough to play right-back for the national team.

Before the 2-0 defeat by China in March, you spoke of playing in World Cup mode, namely defensively. Is defence the team's biggest problem?
I don't think we have a big problem at the back. The system we used against China was based on one meeting and one training session. Under the circumstances, I thought we did rather well. While we mustn't be afraid of our opponents in France, we have to be aware of their strength. We can't play the same way as against Asian teams. Our priority has to be to stop the other side scoring.

Japanese football is rather non-physical by global standards. Do you fear what your players may face in France?
It's true it won't be easy, but my players have shown they can hold off the pressure and keep their heads. Physically, the gap in ability, creativity, speed and agility – basically everything – can't be helped. I'm planning to cover that gap through solid organisation. Mentally, our players are much more professional now, thanks to the J.League and the experience of the Asian qualifiers.

How do you view your opponents in Group H?
Argentina are a very disciplined team, aggressive in attack and defence. I think of them as a crack military taskforce. Croatia are individually superb, and can go a long way. I'm not so sure about Jamaica, as they're still bringing in new players from England, but they have tremendous physical ability and play a disciplined game. They're improving quickly.

What technical developments should we expect in France?
I'm not anticipating surprises, but the play may be faster, stronger and more accurate than before.

What does qualification for France mean for Japanese football?
Japan will co-host the World Cup in 2002, so it was important for us to qualify on ability. As far as the J.League is concerned, I don't anticipate any rapid recovery of popularity on this account.

Who will win in France?
One of Argentina, Brazil, France and Germany.

Interview: Mike Plastow & Michi Ishijima

HOW THEY LINE UP

Okada has kept his options open, using different formations for the past few games. A back-three system with Ihara as libero is a strong possibility, as is the use of five or six midfielders with one striker. In the qualifiers, he opted for 4-4-2 with a midfield diamond, but a more defensive formation with the focus on counter-attacking is likely in France. The 4-3-1-2 shape was used against China, but with a slightly different line-up. Wagner Lopes and Shoji Jo could start up front ahead of Masashi Nakayama and Kazu Miura.

NAME	CLUB	AGE	CAPS	GLS
GOALKEEPERS				
Yoshikatsu Kawaguchi	Yokohama Marinos	22	24	0
Seigo Narazaki	Yokohama Flugels	22	2	0
Nobuyuki Kojima	Bellmare Hiratsuka	32	5	0
DEFENDERS				
Masami Ihara	Yokohama Marinos	30	114	5
Norio Omura	Yokohama Marinos	28	29	4
Yutaka Akita	Kashima Antlers	27	25	3
Naoki Soma	Kashima Antlers	26	47	3
Akira Narahashi	Kashima Antlers	26	26	0
Toshihide Saito	Shimizu S-Pulse	25	11	0
Daisuke Ichikawa	Shimizu S-Pulse	18	1	0
Eisuke Nakanishi	JEF United	24	6	0
MIDFIELDERS				
Tsuyoshi Kitazawa	Verdy Kawasaki	29	58	3
Motohiro Yamaguchi	Yokohama Flugels	29	53	4
Hiroaki Morishima	Cerezo Osaka	26	37	7
Hiroshi Nanami	Jubilo Iwata	25	41	6
Toshihiro Hattori	Jubilo Iwata	24	5	0
Takashi Hirano	Grampus Eight	23	8	5
Teruyoshi Ito	Shimizu S-Pulse	23	1	0
Hidetoshi Nakata	Bellmare Hiratsuka	21	19	9
Shinji Ono	Urawa Red Diamonds	18	1	0
FORWARDS				
Masashi Nakayama	Jubilo Iwata	30	24	12
Shoji Jo	Yokohama Marinos	22	21	5
Kazuyoshi Miura	Verdy Kawasaki	31	86	54
Wagner Lopes	Bellmare Hiratsuka	29	7	4
Masayuki Okano	Urawa Red Diamonds	25	24	3

Players to watch

HIDETOSHI NAKATA>>
Star man for his vision, timing, dribbling, possession skills, devastating through passes, free-kicks, corners, occasional spectacular goals, fitness, desire to play in Europe (but only for good money), sullen but honest remarks and dyed red hair.

MASASHI NAKAYAMA>>
A prolific scorer for his club (four successive hat-tricks) recently and highly rated in Japan.

THE VIEW FROM JAPAN

KENJI YUASA, football writer and former head coach of Yomiuri (now Verdy Kawasaki)

"Japan have only a 20 per cent chance of reaching the second round. Argentina may be careful at first, and that could be of benefit. It all depends on that first result. The three matches are like a living organism, so I can't say after that.

"Hidetoshi Nakata is the key man, the only one who can compete with world-class players. He has the personality, but he's the only one who does. The rest aren't world-class. But the Japanese mentality is well fitted to organisational play, so they can beat top-class international teams.

"Japan is an economic power, so Japan's qualification is good for football as a whole, as a package. But Japanese football itself isn't so attractive. They can only play systematically."

Saluting the fans...Marcus Gayle applauds Jamaica's passionate supporters

HOW THEY QUALIFIED

CONCACAF SECTION

SECOND ROUND, CARIBBEAN ZONE

31.03.96.....Surinam-Jamaica 0-1
21.04.96.....Jamaica-Surinam 1-0
Jamaica win 2-0 on agg

THIRD ROUND, CARIBBEAN ZONE

23.06.96.....Barbados-Jamaica 0-1
30.06.96.....Jamaica-Barbados 2-0
Jamaica win 3-0 on agg

SEMI-FINAL ROUND, GROUP 3

15.09.96.....Jamaica-Honduras 3-0
23.09.96.....St Vincent-Jamaica 1-2
16.10.96.....Mexico-Jamaica 2-1
27.10.96.....Honduras-Jamaica 0-0
10.11.96.....Jamaica-St Vincent 5-0
17.11.96.....Jamaica-Mexico 1-0

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
***Jamaica**	**6**	**4**	**1**	**1**	**12**	**3**	**13**
Mexico	6	4	0	2	14	6	12
Honduras	6	3	1	2	18	11	10
St Vincent	6	0	0	6	6	30	0

*Jamaica qualify for final round

FINAL ROUND

02.03.97.....Jamaica-USA 0-0
13.04.97.....Mexico-Jamaica 6-0
27.04.97.....Canada-Jamaica.....0-0
11.05.97.....Costa Rica-Jamaica.....3-1
18.05.97.....Jamaica-El Salvador.....1-0
07.09.97.....Jamaica-Canada.....1-0
14.09.97.....Jamaica-Costa Rica.....1-0
03.10.97.....USA-Jamaica 1-1
09.11.97.....El Salvador-Jamaica.....2-2
16.11.97.....Jamaica-Mexico 0-0

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Mexico	10	4	6	0	23	7	18
USA	10	4	5	1	17	9	17
***Jamaica**	**10**	**3**	**5**	**2**	**7**	**12**	**14**
Costa Rica	10	3	3	4	13	12	12
El Salvador	10	2	4	4	11	16	10
Canada	10	1	3	6	5	20	6

* Jamaica qualify for finals

Playing for a nation

The Reggae Boyz carry with them the hopes of the whole of Jamaica

JAMAICA coach Rene Simoes organised 25 warm-up matches in five months – a bizarre plan that has brought indifferent results in the lead-up to the country's historic participation in the World Cup finals.

Defeats by Macedonia and Iran in a four-team tournament in Tehran, following a horribly lame 0-0 draw against Wales in wet, windy Cardiff, appeared to add weight to the views of sceptics such as Italy coach Cesare Maldini that the Reggae Boyz will be out of their depth in the tournament.

Do these performances, with the team undergoing endless changes, reveal the true colours of Jamaica, rather than their much more impressive showings in the CONCACAF Gold Cup against Brazil and Mexico back in February?

It is impossible to say. The match against Wales, for example, was Jamaica's first international on European soil. It was obvious that the players hated the cold, and were not prepared to unleash their attacking skills while wearing thick woolly gloves.

World Cup games in the summer heat of France will be entirely different, according to goalkeeper Warren Barrett, who is heading for 130 international caps.

He says: "The coach is experimenting with players, and that is right, because we have to find the best possible team.

"But when the World Cup starts we will have a team in mind, and we won't be afraid of any opponents after showing that we could match Brazil in the Gold Cup. That gave us so much confidence for the future.

"We are not just there as a football team, either; we are playing for a whole nation. Jamaica stops when we are playing, and there is no way we would let down our people. We have brought the country together, giving hope to all those kids who live in the slum areas and dream that football can give them a better life."

No, it would be foolish to underestimate the Reggae Boyz phenomenon, which makes the team far more than the sum of its parts. And Simoes has proved an astute general in his three years in charge.

But English 'imports' such as Darryl Powell of Derby County and Marcus Gayle of Wimbledon are hardly likely to terrify Argentina and Croatia, the favourites to finish in the top two places in Group H.

Much will depend on the goalkeeping of Barrett, who hopes to secure a move to a European club after the World Cup, and skilful home-grown Jamaicans Theodore Whitmore and Ricardo Gardner, a target for Paris Saint-Germain. Their samba-style mentality has been, and should remain, at the heart of the Jamaica team.

Everything probably will rest on the opening fixture against Croatia. Defeat surely would deflate the Reggae Boyz. But a draw or victory could inspire them to reach the knockout stages, matching the achievement of Costa Rica in 1990.

Whatever happens, the charismatic Simoes and the colourful supporters should make the Reggae Boyz one of the most popular teams in France. They will be fun to watch.

Jim Holden

FRANCE 98 SCHEDULE

June 14, v Croatia, Lens
June 21, v Argentina, Paris
June 26, v Japan, Lyon

QUESTIONS TO THE COACH

'I don't care if anyone calls me a madman'

Rene Simoes

What would be a good World Cup for Jamaica?
A good World Cup would be if Jamaica become world champions. Some people have tried to convince me that this is not realistic, but people also said I was unrealistic when I said back in 1994 that we should be aiming to qualify for France. The chance to be world champions is very small but there is a chance and I will work for that. The difference is that if I am not a world champion I will not be disappointed and I will not kill myself. I will learn from it.

Friends who are coaches in Brazil say that because we have already qualified we are already world champions in Jamaica. They say: "Don't go to France, you'll get beat badly, you will be demoralised." That is not my way and that is not the way I build my players. We give them truth, self-confidence and honesty in relationships. I go with them until the end and I hope we are there in the final game of the World Cup.

If Jamaica are not to win the World Cup, who are your favourites?
European countries have been champions whenever the World Cup has been played in Europe, except once. Now there is even more chance of this happening because you have 15 countries from Europe in this World Cup. France have a good chance. As hosts, they will be under pressure, but who doesn't have pressure now? The Germans are potential champions because they know how to play in a tournament. I think England have also prepared very well. Daniel Passarella is doing a wonderful job with Argentina – the blend of old players and new is excellent. Brazil have a chance but so far I have not seen a good chemistry between the players. After that you must look at the Africans. They have quality now and have worked for that for 20 years. But anyone can be world champions. Jamaica can be and I don't care if anyone calls me a madman.

Who will be the stars of this World Cup?
I like Zidane of France very much. He is very powerful and reminds me of Van Basten. If he was a little more selfish he could score more goals. He is fantastic.

Which Jamaican players will people sit up and take notice of?
Ricardo Gardner is a player who has the potential to shine. Also Andy Williams.

Which tactical and technical developments will we see in France?
Players must learn to think as quickly as possible. The physical condition and the tactics mean players must recover very quickly. The techniques and skills are more akin to indoor soccer. In Brazilian indoor soccer they play over a shorter space and players have to be able to react more quickly.

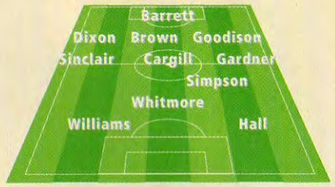
Tactically, I would like to see something like Holland in 1974. If you have the ball you have 11 strikers and if the opposition have the ball you have 11 defenders. Fitzroy Simpson was right when he said that the Jamaican style is "freedom football with discipline".

Football needs some revolutionary changes. It makes no sense that referees and linesmen have remote control so they can communicate with each other, but that the coach cannot communicate with his players.

How do you rate your group opponents?
Argentina are number one, Croatia number two, then it's Japan and then us. Croatia play a Yugoslavian style and have very skilful players. As a team they sometimes break down but as individuals they are wonderful. Japan didn't used to play football, they ran with the ball. Now they don't run as much and they are not as fast. They think a little more and take care of the ball. But the Japanese have some weaknesses and we can take advantage of that.

Interview: Dan Davies

HOW THEY LINE UP



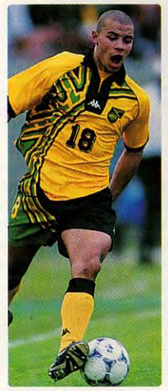
Simoes prefers an attacking 3-5-2 formation. "We like to play with the ball on the ground floor," he says. "When we played Wales recently they liked to play with the ball on the 50th floor." Sinclair will probably come in for local boy Malcolm while Cargill holds everything together in midfield, covering for Gardner when he rampages forward. Whitmore, the so-called 'King of the Hill', plays behind the two main strikers, but could be replaced by the more pragmatic Earle or Powell. Hall is a likely first choice up front, and will be partnered by either Burton, Gayle or the talented but inexperienced Williams.

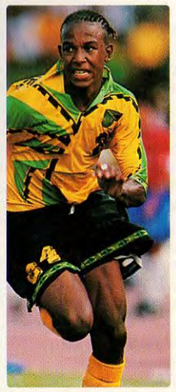
NAME	CLUB	AGE	CAPS	GOALS
GOALKEEPERS				
Warren Barrett	Violet Kickers	27	116	0
Aaron Lawrence	Reno	27	15	0
DEFENDERS				
Ricardo Gardner	Harbour View	19	19	1
Clifton Waugh	Black Star	25	0	0
Ian Goodison	Olympic Gardens	25	38	2
Linval Dixon	Hazard	26	92	3
Durrant Brown	Waddadah	33	112	2
Donald Stewart	Real Mona	23	29	1
Stephen Malcolm	Seba United	28	49	3
Gregory Messam	Harbour View	24	48	5
Frank Sinclair	Chelsea (Eng)	26	5	0
Winston Griffiths	Hazard	20	3	3
MIDFIELDERS				
Theodore Whitmore	Seba United	25	66	11
Peter Cargill	Harbour View	34	61	5
Christopher Dawes	Chadzeme (Bel)	23	26	1
Robbie Earle	Wimbledon (Eng)	33	6	0
Fitzroy Simpson	Portsmouth (Eng)	28	18	1
Darryl Powell	Derby Co (Eng)	26	2	0
FORWARDS				
Andrew Williams	Real Mona	20	17	3
Deon Burton	Derby Co (Eng)	21	13	4
Paul Hall	Portsmouth (Eng)	25	18	8
Marcus Gayle	Wimbledon (Eng)	27	3	1
Walter Boyd	Arnett Gardens	26	58	17

Players to watch

DEON BURTON >
The national team's star man. Known as Neon Deon or One Love and was voted Jamaican Sports Personality of the Year for the goals which took the Reggae Boyz to France. Despite international success, he has struggled to gain a starting place at club side Derby.

RICARDO GARDNER >>
Regarded as the baby of the team (nicknamed Bibi) and earnt his first cap while still a schoolboy. An overlapping defender with good dribbling skills. Impressed on pre-finals tour of Britain.





THE VIEW FROM JAMAICA

AUDLEY BOYD,
sports writer, The Gleanor

"Rene Simoes is respected as a coach, but some people are starting to question his personality. Most of the time he has got into hot water with the press or public it has been over Walter Boyd, who is undoubtedly the best striker in Jamaica.

"A lot of the issue with Walter is that now the team have qualified there are more England-based players coming over. People don't have a problem with Paul Hall, Fitzroy Simpson, Robbie Earle or Deon Burton because they came originally. But people are upset that these new players had the option of coming from day one but did not. Why should they reap the glory now?

"The long-term future of Jamaican football depends on what happens after the World Cup. A lot of people think Simoes might leave and there are a lot of questions about him now. When he first came to coach Jamaica he went to England and came back saying the talent there was not as good as we have in Jamaica. Then we had four players from England. Now we have qualified he has gone to get some more to take the places of Jamaicans who have played their hearts out."

Checkmate...Zvonimir Boban helped Croatia overcome Ukraine in the play-offs

HOW THEY QUALIFIED

EUROPEAN SECTION, GROUP 1

08.10.96 .....Bosnia-Croatia 1-4
10.11.96 .....Croatia-Greece 1-1
29.03.97 .....Croatia-Denmark 1-1
02.04.97 .....Croatia-Slovenia 3-3
30.04.97 .....Greece-Croatia 0-1
06.09.97 .....Croatia-Bosnia 3-2
10.09.97 .....Denmark-Croatia 3-1
11.10.97 .....Slovenia-Croatia 1-3

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Denmark	8	5	2	1	14	6	17
***Croatia**	**8**	**4**	**3**	**1**	**17**	**12**	**15**
Greece	8	4	2	2	11	4	14
Bosnia-H'a	8	3	0	5	9	14	9
Slovenia	8	0	1	7	5	20	1

*Croatia enter play-offs

PLAY-OFFS

29.10.97 .....Croatia-Ukraine 2-0
15.11.97 .....Ukraine-Croatia 1-1
Croatia win 3-1 on agg and qualify for finals

FRANCE 98 SCHEDULE

June 14,
v Jamaica, Lens
June 20,
v Japan, Nantes
June 26,
v Argentina, Bordeaux

The fame game

Croatia's talented individuals have a chance to shine on the world stage

CROATIA's coach, Miroslav Blazevic, is famous for his forecasts. Like a footballing answer to Muhammad Ali, he shoots his mouth off at every opportunity.

Even though some of his sayings are outrageously unlikely, he appears to believe them and is saddened when others do not.

Hear him now: "Our players are the best in the world. We'll be the dark horses in the World Cup and will play in the Final, against France."

Few others, supporters or not, would agree. But plenty of fans are spending their money on trips to France to see their team, and longing for the Blazevic prediction to come true, even though they don't believe it will.

Many of the fans are as passionate as Blazevic. When the international community threatened to impose sanctions on Croatia, because of the political situation, the people were more concerned about the possibility of missing the World Cup than they were about the economic consequences.

During their battle for independence, the Croats suffered many horrible crimes, with the damage to the cities of Dubrovnik and Vukovar only the tip of the iceberg. There was enormous joy throughout the nation when the world at last recognised an independent Croatia – and the team's qualification for Euro 96 and France 98 brought great happiness to the population, too.

Sport provides a chance for Croatia and its people to achieve global recognition, and has led to enormous popularity for the likes of Goran Ivanisevic and Iva Majoli (tennis), Dino Rada and Toni Kukoc (basketball) and footballers such as Alen Boksic and Davor Suker.

Now the nation awaits the soccer team's performances in the biggest event of all – none more keenly than President Franjo Tudjman. He has not always been an admirer of Blazevic, who needs a good World Cup to get more recognition from the big boss as well as to show everyone else that he is an expert.

The coach argues that Pele does not fall into that last category. The Brazilian was quoted as saying that Japan have their best chance of a win when they meet Croatia, "because the Croatian team is not very impressive". Blazevic angrily told journalists: "Pele was a great, but only on the field. Now he has shown his ignorance."

The team's composition is causing problems for the coach, because only Boksic (Lazio) and Zvonimir Boban (Milan) have been at their best in recent months, and the former has rarely shown his perceived greatness in an international jersey.

Goalkeepers have proved troublesome, with Ladic (Croatia Zagreb), Mrmic (Besiktas) and Gabric (Hajduk Split) conceding 'dodgy' goals in the past two seasons. In front of them, Bilic (Everton) and Stimac (Derby) have not been even close to the form they showed before they moved to England, Asanovic is not playing for Napoli and Prosinecki (Croatia Zagreb) has been struggling with various injuries.

Vlaovic (Valencia) and Cvitanovic (Real Sociedad) also have missed a lot of games, while Suker has been spending most matchdays on the Real Madrid bench, and does not look like a man who has scored 26 goals for Croatia in 33 appearances.

Despite all this, a place in the second stage is likely. Victory against Japan and Jamaica could mean qualification being achieved before they face Argentina. The players are optimistic and determined to make the most of what will be the first and last World Cup for the majority of them. Most will be too old for the 2002 finals. "Great matches can only be won by experience," claims Blazevic. "It's a German recipe and I respect it."

Zdravko Reic

QUESTIONS TO THE COACH

'I would love to play France in the Final'

Miroslav Blazevic

● *What do you hope your team can achieve at the World Cup?*
If we manage to escape injuries – if the team could be as complete as I would like it to be – we could reach the semi-finals, or even the Final. It would be a huge disappointment if we did not get past the first stage.

● *Which country do you think will lift the Cup?*
My favourite is France, I would love to play them in the Final. Brazil will be fancied, but I do not think they will manage to win it again. Argentina will be a danger – they have the necessary character.

● *Will any surprise teams or players emerge?*
Croatia will be the surprise team, in the way the Czech Republic were at Euro 96. I believe there will be a lot of surprising results and some of the favourites will prove to be disappointments – Italy, for example. As for the top man in this World Cup, he will be one of ours – Boban, Suker or Boksic.

● *What sort of style will your team adopt in France?*
We will aim to play an open, aggressive and attacking style, looking to win every game, not draw. Davor Suker and Alen Boksic will prove themselves to be genuine goalscorers, and in midfield, Zvonimir Boban and Robert Prosinecki will impress the world. The goalkeeping position will prove vital, too – there are no great results without great goalkeeping.

● *Will there be any major tactical differences in this tournament?*
I expect my theory to be proved right again – there are no strict plans once the players are on the pitch. The only tactics are their abilities. All these stories about playing 4-4-2 or 3-5-2 are only for the newspapers.
We have a good chance to succeed because our players have great technical skill, in attack and defence, in every corner of the field.

● *What do you expect to happen in your group?*
I don't think Japan and Jamaica will be a threat. Our most important game is the first, against the Jamaicans, because a good start is essential. If we win that one, we'll be encouraged.

Interview: Zdravko Reic

HOW THEY LINE UP

Croatia will play an attacking game, but with a slow build-up involving lots of passes. Their weakness is the slowness in defence, while the main plus point is the all-round ability of so many players who can outplay their direct opponents. Blazevic is counting on Boksic as the main force in destroying defences, a job he does so well for Lazio in Serie A, and is longing for Suker to regain his old form. Croatia tend to play with a lot of individual effort and not so much with collective spirit and team tactics. This could be a large problem if the individuals do not perform to their best.

NAME	CLUB	AGE	CAPS	GLS
GOALKEEPERS				
Drazen Ladic	Croatia Zagreb	35	38	0
Marijan Mrmic	Besiktas (Tur)	33	10	0
Vladimir Vasilj	Hrvatski Dragovoljac	22	0	0
DEFENDERS				
Slaven Bilic	Everton (Eng)	29	35	3
Goran Juric	Croatia Zagreb	35	8	0
Dario Simic	Croatia Zagreb	22	14	0
Igor Stimac	Derby County (Eng)	30	26	2
Stjepan Tomas	Croatia Zagreb	22	1	0
Igor Tudor	Hajduk Split	20	2	1
MIDFIELDERS				
Aljosa Asanovic	Napoli (Ita)	32	36	3
Zvonimir Boban	Milan (Ita)	29	32	8
Robert Jarni	Real Betis (Spa)	29	35	0
Zoran Mamic	Bochum (Ger)	26	4	0
Silvio Maric	Croatia Zagreb	23	4	1
Robert Prosinecki	Croatia Zagreb	29	26	4
Zvonimir Soldo	VfB Stuttgart (Ger)	30	23	1
Mario Stanic	Parma (Ita)	26	9	3
FORWARDS				
Alen Boksic	Lazio (Ita)	28	23	6
Igor Cvitanovic	Real Sociedad (Spa)	27	22	3
Tomislav Erceg	Ancona (Ita)	26	4	1
Davor Suker	Real Madrid (Spa)	30	33	26
Goran Vlaovic	Valencia (Spa)	26	25	10
Jurica Vucko	Hajduk Split	21	0	0

Players to watch

< ALEN BOKSIC
Expected to be the team's outstanding player and among the best in the competition. He has been in good form with Lazio and was outstanding for Croatia in two important games – the 3-1 win over Slovenia in Ljubliana and the 1-1 draw with Ukraine in Kiev. His speed and dribbling skill make him Europe's answer to Ronaldo. France is a lucky country for him. He won the French title and Champions Cup with Marseille.

IGOR TUDOR
Youngest player to become a full Croatian international when he made his debut at 19 years and 212 days. Plays as a stopper for Hajduk Split but can do a job in midfield. Tomaslav Ivic, the Croatian now coaching Iran, says Tudor is a mix of Rijkaard and Desailly! He is strong, moves well, hits excellent long passes – and has lots of top clubs on his track.

THE VIEW FROM CROATIA

JOSIP KUZE, a Croatian and former coach of Japanese club Gamba Osaka

"I don't want to say much [there is rivalry between Blazevic and Kuze because the latter has been rumoured as a possible national coach if the team do badly in France] but it's strange that Blazevic did not ask me for help in preparing the team for Japan. He doesn't know much about Japanese football and its strength. If the team underestimate the Japanese, they could be in trouble. I still think we'll get to round two, but no further."

IVICA SURJAK (right), *who won 56 Yugoslav caps and is now sports director of Hajduk Split*

"Croatia's team will be unstoppable. They have saved their energy and strength and will show their full potential."

Character full.

Strong words, softly spoken

SINCE 1897
CAFFREY'S
IRISH ALE

Brewed in Co. Antrim and Great Britain.

1998 Cup-winners Cup Final

Vialli on a high

Gavin Hamilton sees Chelsea triumph in Stockholm

GIANLUCA VIALLI is getting the hang of this management lark. In the space of four months since he replaced Ruud Gullit as player-manager of Chelsea, the Italian has guided the Stamford Bridge club to the English League Cup and now, after a one-sided affair against VfB Stuttgart in Stockholm, the European Cup-winners Cup.

Vialli has cause to thank two people in particular: substitute Gianfranco Zola, the scorer of a wonderful goal against Stuttgart, and coach Graham Rix, Vialli's eyes and ears on the bench, who took the decision to replace Tore Andre Flo with Zola in the 71st minute.

Zola's entrance could not have been more sensational. Within 30 seconds, and with only his second touch of the ball, the diminutive Italian controlled a through pass from Dennis Wise and fired an unstoppable shot past Franz Wohlfahrt in the Stuttgart goal. That was enough to give Chelsea victory and their first European trophy since they beat Real Madrid 27 years ago in the same competition.

Italian job...Zola and Vialli lift Chelsea's first European trophy for 27 years

Finishing touch...Zola strikes to win the Cup-winners Cup for Chelsea

For Zola, kept on the bench because of injury, the goal revived his chances of inclusion in Cesare Maldini's Italian national squad for the World Cup. "It was quite incredible for me," Zola said. "I couldn't contain myself.

"I want to thank the masseur who treated me. He [Mimmo Pezza] did a fantastic job. You must imagine my situation. Eighteen days ago, my dream turned into nothing. Then after treatment, suddenly I'm in the match. I came on...scored... and won the cup."

The quality of the football was, like the pitch at the Rasunda stadium, patchy and unpredictable. Stuttgart had the better chances in the first half, Nigerian international Jonathan Akpoborie passing to Krassimir Balakov in the penalty area in the ninth minute when he should have shot. Balakov was crowded out, but went close in the 18th minute. Ed De Goey, so often Chelsea's saviour in the earlier rounds, parried the Bulgarian's shot.

Chelsea began to assert themselves as the first half progressed, and went close through Di Matteo, Poyet and Wise.

Stuttgart offered little in the second half – "we played too many long passes and Chelsea were more difficult to control," coach Joachim Low said afterwards – and the feeling grew that it would be Chelsea who would make the initial breakthrough.

Vialli was quick to acknowledge Rix's part in the substitution. "He had a feeling, and he was right," said the Chelsea player-manager. "It was a great second touch from Zola. He put the ball in the net and we won the cup. But the credit has to be shared between all the chaps.

"We don't want to stop here. We want to keep improving and next season start thinking about winning the Premier League. That is now our target."

Despite their Premiership ambitions, Chelsea will defend their European title next season. But it was hard to escape the fact that this was a damp squib of a final in a competition which is fast losing its appeal.

Barcelona, last season's winners, did not even bother to defend their title, preferring instead to dip their snouts in the honeypot that is the UEFA Champions League. Next season, Spain, Germany and England will be represented by the runners-up in their cup competitions: Mallorca, Duisburg and Newcastle United.

Holland will be represented by Heerenveen, who beat Twente 3-1 in a play-off between the losing Dutch Cup semi-finalists. The finalists, Ajax and PSV, had already booked their places in next season's Champions League.

CUP-WINNERS CUP FINAL

MAY 13, STOCKHOLM, RASUNDA STADIUM

CHELSEA 1 (Zola 71)
VfB STUTTGART 0

HT: 0-0. **Att:** 30,216. **Ref:** S.Braschi (Italy)

Chelsea: De Goey - Petrescu, Clarke, Leboeuf, Duberry, Granville - Poyet (Newton 80), Wise, Di Matteo - Flo (Zola 71), Vialli. Subs not used: Hitchcock, Myers, Charvet, Morris, M.Hughes. *Petrescu sent off, 84min.

VfB Stuttgart: Wohlfahrt - Yakin, Berthold, Hagner (Ristic 78), Haber (Djordjevic 74) - Schneider (Endress 55), Soldo, Poshner, Akpoborie - Bobic, Balakov. Subs not used: Ziegler, Becker, Liszts, Stojkovski. *Poshner sent off, 90min.

1998 UEFA CUP FINAL

MAY 6 - PARIS, PARC DES PRINCES

LAZIO 0
INTERNAZIONALE 3
(Zamorano 5, Zanetti 60, Ronaldo 70)

HT: 0-1. **Att:** 45,000. **Ref:** Lopez Nieto (Spa)

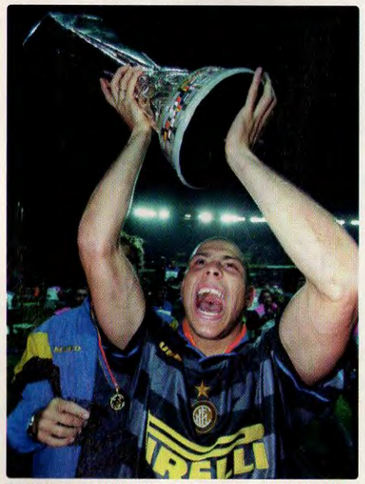
Lazio: Marchegiani - Grandoni (Gottardi 55), Nesta, Negro, Favalli - Fuser, Venturin (*Almeyda 49), Jugovic, Nedved - Casiraghi, Mancini. **Almeya sent off, 87min.*
Coach: Eriksson.

Inter: Pagliuca - Colonnese, *West, Fresi, Zanetti - Winter (Cauet 69), Ze Elias, Simeone - Djorkaeff (Moriero 69) - Zamorano (Sartor 74), Ronaldo. **West sent off, 82min.*
Coach: Simoni.

One-nil...Zamorano opens the scoring for Inter

Inter all the way

Keir Radnedge in Paris sees Ronaldo on the treble trail



Cup king...and the UEFA makes it two for Ronaldo

NOTHING in international football now is quite as it seems. Thus with the first single-leg UEFA Cup Final. The provision of a neutral venue was lost on Inter and Lazio as Italy took over Parc des Princes for the day.

That Inter carried off a first trophy of the second Moratti era – Massimo now holding the presidency which was his father's in the 1960s – was due to their own ambition on the night and to Lazio's lack of engagement. Not that Lazio did not want to win, just that Inter wanted it so much more.

The single-match format suited Gigi Simoni's men at this stage in a tiring season. Not that the two-leg format was abandoned with players' mental and physical health in mind, of course, but rather to clear one more fixture date down the twisting road towards long-term expansion of the UEFA Champions League.

None of the players or fans appeared to resent travelling so far north to the French capital for a domestic occasion. Moratti had never been to the Parc before and travelled with his family via Disneyland. Lazio owner Sergio Cragnotti was delighted that not only had his club reached their first European final, but had done so to coincide with their stock market launch.

The coaches were not quite as relaxed. Simoni, who chose only three Italians in Inter's starting line-up, was praying that his men would make amends for last year's shoot-out defeat by Schalke and aware that, if they did not, his job might be back on the line. As for Lazio's Sven-Goran Eriksson, he admitted to feeling more relaxed than when he faced Milanese opposition the last time in a European final – as Benfica boss against Milan in the 1980 Champions Cup decider. But then Eriksson's Lazio already had one trophy tucked away after hitting back from two goals down to beat Milan in this past season's Italian Cup Final.

Inter claimed the better team, albeit minus the injured Alen Boksic, they also had the better individuals, right down to match-winner Ronaldo, whose duel with Nesta was expected to decide the match. But it was Inter's other South American striker, Ivan Zamorano, who achieved the decisive early breakthrough. Diego Simeone's long through ball caught Lazio flat and asleep. Zamorano took off like a greyhound and was already clear of the defence by the time the pass arrived. Keeper Marchegiani made it easier for him by hesitating in anticipation of an unforthcoming offside flag, and Zamorano flicked the ball beyond him.

Although possession was shared equally, Inter were the more dangerous attacking force and might have increased their lead in the 25th minute when Javier Zanetti and Youri Djorkaeff provided Ronaldo with the chance to smack a 25-yarder against the angle of post and crossbar. Lazio's only first-half effort was a snatched header by Casiraghi which flew over the bar.

Inter had correctly identified Diego Fuser, wide on the right, as the source of most of Lazio's attacking inspiration and Zanetti's ultimate mastery of him was not the least of his contributions to Inter's third UEFA Cup in eight seasons.

While there was only one goal, Lazio were still in the final, and the introduction of Matyas Almeyda to the midfield shortly after the interval promised briefly to help make the difference. He brought Inter-style physical commitment to Lazio's midfield and offered a more direct service of the ball up to Casiraghi and the vainly inventive Roberto Mancini. Unfortunately Almeyda also displayed a penchant for those ugly old tendencies which scarred the reputation of Argentine football: first he was booked for nagging referee Antonio Lopez Nieto over a free-kick. Then he swung a boot in frustration at Ronaldo as the Brazilian turned Lazio inside out yet again. Lopez Nieto appreciated it was not the most malicious of kicks by extracting 'only' the yellow card. Thus it was the original, silly sin of dissent which, in effect, got Almeyda sent off, albeit too late to matter.

Moments earlier, Nigerian defender Taribo West had been sent off for elbowing Casiraghi after a tumble. Again it was a piece of indisciplined stupidity. Nigeria's World Cup coach, Bora Milutinovic, would not have been impressed.

By the time West went, however, the match was over as a contest with Inter 3-0 up. First Zamorano turned back a long cross from Ronaldo, and Zanetti thumped a 25-yarder beyond a stunned Marchegiani just inside the angle. Then the Lazio defence stopped wrongly, misled by the flicker of a linesman's flag, as Ronaldo strode through alone on to Benoit Cauet's pass to score number three.

"It was the first goal that did it," said Eriksson. "We did not expect to concede so quickly. After that we were always chasing the match and they caught us on the classic counter-attack. The longer the match went the more risks we had to take and the more space we left. Inter are a strong side, I take my hat off to them. They deserved to win – but not by 3-0."

Simoni agreed with Eriksson's assessment, saying: "We were very keen to score the first goal, that's why I started with, in effect, three forwards. Scoring so soon gave us the opportunity to dictate the game. The longer the match went on the stronger we looked.

"Lazio did not have the same physical edge. But then, they had the Italian Cup to distract them. They got a great result there but maybe they paid the penalty against us."

For Ronaldo it was yet another cup win. He was voted Man of the Match and, after collecting the Cup-winners Cup last year, could complete an historic hat-trick next season, as Inter pursue the Champions Cup.

In the meantime, of course, he will be back in Paris with other fish to fry.

EXCLUSIVE OFFER LIMITED TIME ONLY!

GET YOUR OFFICIAL WORLD CUP '98 SPORT CAPS! AND APPAREL

FRANCE 98 COUPE DU MONDE LICENCE OFFICIELLE

©The France 98 Emblem and Official Mascot are Copyrights and Trademarks of ISL.

CALL NOW TOLL FREE 0-800-731-3442

CALL 0-800-731-3442 OR FAX YOUR ORDER TODAY TO 0-800-731-3738 CREDIT CARD ORDERS ONLY 24 HOURS, 7 DAYS

In U.S.A. or Canada call 1-800-411-9411 or fax 1-800-355-0003.
*NOTE: ALL T-SHIRT ITEM NUMBERS ARE THE SAME AS HAT ITEM NUMBERS

ITEM #	DESCRIPTION	HAT QUANTITY + SHIRT QUANTITY (size)		TOTAL
			£4 SHIPPING AND HANDLING	+ £4
			TOTAL	

NAME: _____
ADDRESS: _____
PHONE: _____
CITY: _____ STATE/PROV: _____
COUNTRY: _____ POSTAL CODE: _____
CREDIT CARD #: _____
MASTERCARD ☐/ VISA ☐/ AMEX ☐ EXPIRY DATE: _____
SIGNATURE: _____

Please Include alternate choice.Quantities Limited. Please allow a minimum of 7 days for shipping and handling. U.S. orders add $4.50 shipping and handling.

Real reclaim the prize

Gavin Hamilton in Amsterdam witnesses a seventh Champions Cup triumph for Madrid

1998 UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE FINAL

MAY 20, AMSTERDAM ARENA

REAL MADRID 1 (Mijatovic 67)
JUVENTUS 0

HT: 0-0. **Att:** 47,500. **Ref:** Krug (Ger)

Real Madrid: Illgner - Roberto Carlos, Sanchis, Hierro, Panucci - Redondo, Seedorf, Karembeu - Raul (Amavisca 90) - Mijatovic (Suker 89), Morientes (Jaime 82). Subs not used: Canizares, Victor, Sanz, Savio.

Juventus: Peruzzi - Pessotto (Fonseca 71), Iuliano, Montero, Torricelli, Di Livio (Tacchinardi 46) - Davids, Deschamps (Conte 78) - Zidane - Del Piero, Inzaghi. Subs not used: Rampulla, Dimas, Birindelli, Amoruso.

THE WAITING is over. After 32 years, Real Madrid are champions of Europe again. The club, who over the years have done so much to make the Champions Cup such a unique event, claimed their seventh title in the competition with a victory over Juventus in the Amsterdam Arena that owed as much to the Italians' profligacy in front of goal as it did to Real's eventual superiority.

The scorer of the only goal, Yugoslav Predrag Mijatovic, did not dedicate his success to the fans, who had waited since Real's defeat of Partizan Belgrade in 1966 for their team to be crowned kings of Europe again. "Lots of people deserve to be mentioned: the fans, the players, the backroom staff," he said. "But I dedicate the goal and the cup to my son Andrea."

The Montenegrin's success in recent seasons has been tempered by tragedy: his three-year-old son has hydrocephalus (water on the brain). Mijatovic's own performances this past season have, like his team's, been inconsistent, a victim of injury and loss of form.

His coach, the German Jupp Heynckes, was quick to praise all his players. "They just had more willpower to take the title," he said. "They had more inspiration. I said before the game that whoever scored the first goal would win the game." However, with the coach expecting to be sacked at the season's end, even this victory might not be enough to keep him at Madrid.

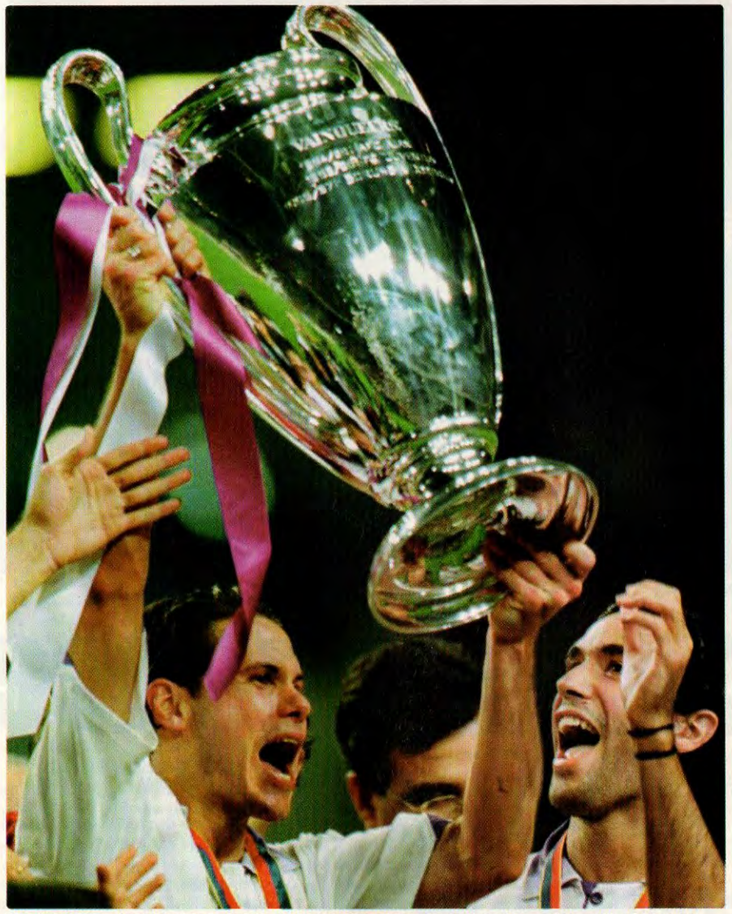
The match understandably had been billed as the dream Final. In the words of Alfredo Di Stefano, it was "what the Copa Europa is all about". It was a Final full of delicious possibilities and tantalising confrontations. Strip away the commercial razzmatazz demanded by the sponsors these days and this still had the potential to be a classic encounter. It pitted Real's history and tradition against Juventus's modern-day strength and dominance. There was Del Piero against Raul in the battle of the boy wonders. Frenchmen Zidane and Deschamps against fellow international Christian Karembeu. Roberto Carlos against Di Livio in a potentially explosive encounter on the flank. And there was Edgar Davids against his fellow dreadlocked Dutchman Clarence Seedorf, childhood friends, team-mates and winners with Ajax in 1995.

With 17 likely World Cup participants in the starting line-ups, there could be no more mouth-watering appetiser for France 98. Juventus were the clear pre-match favourites, just as they had been a year earlier when they lost to Borussia Dortmund in Munich. Indeed, Marcello Lippi's side had the better of the early encounters, with Karembeu struggling to establish himself in the holding midfield role alongside Redondo and Seedorf wide on the right. Zidane had the first clear chance, but he shot wide after Del Piero's free-kick had deflected off the defensive wall.

"For the first 20 minutes we were under a lot of pressure," said centre-back Fernando Hierro, who gave a masterful performance in shackling Del Piero. "Then we took over, and it was our match from then on."

Indeed, the best chance of the half fell to Madrid. Mijatovic tricked Torricelli on the left and crossed for Raul. But the youngster showed the lack of finishing finesse that has frustrated even his greatest admirers all season. He stabbed the ball outside the near post from close range when it seemed easier to score.

Decisive moment...Mijatovic rounds Peruzzi to score the only goal of the game



The Real thing...Madrid players finally get their hands on the Champions Cup – after a gap of 32 years

Juventus tried to take control after the break, when Tacchinardi replaced Di Livio in a bid to give the midfield more balance. Torricelli went desperately close from Zidane's free-kick and Inzaghi twice wasted chances which usually he devours.

Italian missed opportunities, and the growing influence of Real's midfield trio of Seedorf, Redondo and Karembeu in marginalising Zidane meant Real were always the more likely to score. The breakthrough came halfway through the second half. A cross from Seedorf on the right was cleared by Juventus, but only as far as Roberto Carlos. His shot was blocked but the ball fell to Mijatovic, unmarked six yards out. The Yugoslav composed himself before dancing around Peruzzi and clipping a shot in from a tight angle.

Mijatovic said: "The ball just fell kindly to me. There was nothing I had to do. All I needed was to chip the ball over the keeper. It was certainly not a pretty goal, I have scored more beautiful ones, but never a more important one."

Juventus had chances to equalise – Inzaghi again and Davids – as Real continued to press forward. But the night was made for *Madrilenos*. They celebrated into the early hours in Amsterdam, safe in the knowledge that the party would still be going on when they made it back to Madrid.

For Christian Panucci and Clarence Seedorf, victory was particularly sweet. They joined a select band of players who have won the Champions Cup with two clubs, Panucci with Milan in 1994 and Seedorf with Ajax in 1995. For Juventus, the first club in the Champions Cup's history to be runners-up for a second successive year, defeat hurt, not least because they had been such overwhelming favourites before the kick-off. Coach Lippi conceded: "Real Madrid deserved to win. They played much better than their standard of this season, while we played below ours."

In the dressing-room area of the Amsterdam Arena, there is a picture of a mock bullfight, painted to commemorate Ajax's 3-1 aggregate win over Real Madrid in the 1973 Champions Cup semi-final. Then, as now, Real Madrid's illustrious history went before them. Then, as now, they were the team to beat. Welcome back Real. It was well worth the wait.

THE ACTION AS IT HAPPENED

0 .....Real kick off.
5 .....Deschamps' shot is held by Illgner.
9 .....Di Livio, played in on the right by Zidane, sees his cross deflected by Roberto Carlos just past a post.
10 ....Mijatovic shoots from 20 yards out, but his shot is easily held by Peruzzi.
13 ....Davids plays a one-two with Zidane, but is obstructed by Hierro. The resulting free-kick from Del Piero hits the wall and reaches Zidane, through on goal, but he shoots wide.
19 ....Hierro's fierce free-kick is tipped over the crossbar by Peruzzi.
23 ....Davids shoots over from 25 yards out.
24 ....Hierro is booked for an apparently clean tackle on Del Piero.
25 ....An impressive run from Davids almost plays in Inzaghi.
26 ....The best chance of the half. Mijatovic beats Torricelli on the left, crosses for Raul, but the 20-year-old turns the ball round the near post.
31 ....Morientes, unmarked, fails to react when a deflected Roberto Carlos corner lands at his feet.
35 ....Davids is booked for a trip on Mijatovic.
37 ....Roberto Carlos protests vigorously when he is booked for a challenge on Di Livio.
45 ....Davids fouls Seedorf but escapes without a second booking.
46 ....Juve kick off. Tacchinardi is a half-time substitute for Di Livio.
49 ....Mijatovic beats Pessotto and Davids to cross on the right-hand side, but Raul cannot control the ball, which breaks loose to Redondo, but he too fails to shoot.
51 ....Juventus win a free-kick almost by the corner flag. A scramble ensues from Zidane's curling shot; Torricelli can only stab the ball over.
57 ....Karembeu is booked for a foul on Del Piero.
60 ....Davids breaks clear on the left, crosses for Inzaghi, who chests the ball down before volleying at Illgner, who tips over the bar.
62 ....Juve win a free-kick 25 yards out. Del Piero's shot is blocked by the wall, but the kick has to be taken again as the wall is not far enough back. Zidane's shot is again blocked, but the ball breaks free to Inzaghi, who freezes in front of an open goal and shoots straight at Illgner.
66 ....Karembeu shoots wildly wide from long range.
67 ....Seedorf, in space on the right, crosses but over Raul's head. The ball falls to Roberto Carlos on the left. His shot is deflected to Mijatovic, six yards out, who dances around Peruzzi to score. 1-0.
68 ....Inzaghi stabs Del Piero's cross just past a post.
71 ....Fonseca replaces Pessotto for Juventus.
76 ....Davids weaves his way through the Real defence, but can only shoot weakly at Illgner.
78 ....Conte replaces Deschamps for Juventus.
82 ....Real bring on Jaime for Morientes.
86 ....Zidane's curling free-kick evades everyone in the penalty area but passes outside Illgner's post.
87 ....Inzaghi, played through by Tacchinardi, shoots wide, but is offside anyway.
88 ....Seedorf beats Montero to a high ball in the box, but cannot control it.
89 ....Suker replaces Mijatovic for Real.
90 ....Amavisca replaces Raul for Real. Seedorf is booked for a foul on Davids and then bizarrely shown red. The referee withdraws the red card when he realises Seedorf hasn't already been booked.

A man alone...referee Ceccarini faces the wrath of Inter's players

Fuel on the furnace

Serie A's season will be best remembered for its controversial end, recalls Paddy Agnew

ITALIAN MPs almost came to blows about it in parliament. The Italian Bishops' Conference felt obliged to issue a comment. Every news organisation in the land made it the main story. In bars and restaurants up and down the peninsula, it was the primary, bitterly divisive, topic of the day.

What was the cause of the furore? Death and floods in Campania? The Genoa serial killings? The escape from custody of former PS Masonic Lodge leader Licio Gelli? Italy's membership of Europe's single currency, the 'Euro'?

No, not exactly. We are talking about the 1-0 Juventus win over Inter in a virtual championship decider. Remember, Juventus went into this game one point clear of Inter and their victory, with three games left to play of the Serie A season, finished off the championship contest there and then.

Even by the standards of a country whose passion for football knows no bounds, the polemics generated by the controversial refereeing of Piero Ceccarini in this all-decisive game touched unprecedented heights.

For the uninitiated, halfway through the second half at the Delle Alpi, and with the score at 1-0 in favour of Juventus, Inter's Ronaldo was unceremoniously upended in the penalty area by Mark Iuliano. To 59,999,999 Italians watching across the country it looked a certain penalty. To Signore Ceccarini, it was a case of play on.

Ceccarini then poured high-octane fuel on the burning furnace of outraged Inter emotions when, 25 seconds later, he awarded a penalty to Juve when Alessandro Del Piero was floored by a clumsy tackle from Taribo West.

At this point, and notwithstanding the fact that Del Piero missed the penalty, several Inter players, plus coach Gigi Simoni completely lost their cool, the latter so much so that he was dismissed from the sidelines by Ceccarini.

Given that Juventus already had benefitted from at least four controversial decisions during the season (obvious penalties not awarded against them in games against Lazio and Roma, plus two obvious goals scored against them by Udinese and Empoli, subsequently overruled, although TV replays later proved that the ball had crossed the line), it took 59,999,999 Italians only 25 seconds to invent a conspiracy theory in which referees were clearly all too deferential to a club which after all, is a national icon.

World Soccer can only come to the following conclusions that: nobody has provided serious evidence of any conspiracy and, when passions subside, many observers will agree that Juventus have been far and away the best team in the land this season. The pity is that it was Signore Ceccarini and not the Juventus superiority which decided the outcome of the 1998 championship.

While Juventus were enjoying their ill-gotten title or thoroughly deserved 25th championship –the choice is yours – their closest season-long rivals, Inter and Lazio, did at least pick up trophies by way of compensation.

Inter beat Lazio for the UEFA Cup and held on to second place in Serie A to earn a Champions League berth next season. Lazio beat Milan to win the the Italian Cup and a Cup-winners Cup berth while, incidentally, denying Milan coach Fabio Capello a last hope of holding on to his job.

Other considerations include the strong nature of the Italian hand in the UEFA Cup – Udinese, Parma, Roma and Fiorentina. All these clubs will give good accounts of themselves next season, while both Sampdoria and Bologna may yet join them in the UEFA Cup via the backdoor of the mid-summer InterToto Cup. As for the other end of Serie A, it is goodbye to Brescia, Atalanta, Lecce and Napoli, the latter going back to the lower division for the first time since 1965.

All over bar the shouting...Juve celebrate victory

SOCCER BOOKS LIMITED

THE A-Z OF ASIAN FOOTBALL 97-98 *Hardback Price £23.95 Postage Rate 'C'*
A new full-colour, well-illustrated A-Z of Asian football endorsed by the Asian Football Confederation. No statistics.

HERBERT CHAPMAN – FOOTBALL EMPEROR *Softback Price £8.99 Postage Rate 'B'*
An interesting look at the career of one of the most successful English managers of all time who won the League Championship with both Huddersfield Town and Arsenal.

ARGENTINA 1971-1997 *Softback Price £5.95 Postage Rate 'A'*
The latest title in the 'International Line-ups and Statistics Series' contains information for Argentina from 1971 to 1997.

RUUD GULLIT: THE CHELSEA DIARY *Reduced Hardback Price £12.99 Postage Rate 'D'*
A new reduced price *(usual price £16.99)* for this excellent insight into Chelsea's 1996/97 F.A. Cup-Winning Season as related by the former manager, Ruud Gullit in a day-by-day account.

ZOLA *Hardback Price £17.95 Postage Rate 'C'*
A new 312-page official biography of Chelsea's Gianfranco Zola, 1997 Footballer of the Year in England.

ROTHMANS FOOTBALL YEARBOOK 1997-98
The 28th edition of the best-selling football annual.
Softback Price £17.99 Postage Rate 'D'

Also available – Postage Rate 'D' : –

1996-97	SOFTBACK EDITION	£17.99
1996-97	HARDBACK EDITION	£30.00
1995-96	HARDBACK EDITION	£30.00
1993-94	HARDBACK EDITION	£27.50
1992-93	SOFTBACK EDITION	£16.95
1991-92	SOFTBACK EDITION	£16.95
1990-91	SOFTBACK EDITION	£16.95
1989-90	SOFTBACK EDITION	£16.95
1988-89	SOFTBACK EDITION	£16.95
1987-88	SOFTBACK EDITION	£16.95
1979-80	SOFTBACK EDITION	£16.95
1977-78	SOFTBACK EDITION	£16.95

ANNUARIO DEL CALCIO MONDIALE 1997-98
10th edition of the Italian-language yearbook with information about football throughout the world.
Hardback Price £21.50 Postage Rate 'D'

Also available – Postage Rate 'D' : –

1996-97	ANNUARIO DEL CALCIO	£19.50
1995-96	ANNUARIO DEL CALCIO	£19.50
1994-95	ANNUARIO DEL CALCIO	£19.50
1993-94	ANNUARIO DEL CALCIO	£21.00
1992-93	ANNUARIO DEL CALCIO	£22.50
1991-92	ANNUARIO DEL CALCIO	£22.50
1990-91	ANNUARIO DEL CALCIO	£25.00
1989-90	ANNUARIO DEL CALCIO	£25.00

NASL – A COMPLETE RECORD OF THE NORTH AMERICAN SOCCER LEAGUE
A large-sized definitive history of the North American Soccer League that details many European players.
Hardback Price £17.95 Postage Rate 'D'

EUROPEAN FOOTBALL – A FANS' GUIDE
An excellent book in the *Rough Guides* series that is packed with information on major European grounds.
Softback Price £14.99 Postage Rate 'B'

THE AFRICAN FOOTBALL GUIDE 1996
First-ever African football yearbook. Large-sized and with around 350 pages of stats. for over 50 countries.
Softback Price £27.50 Postage Rate 'C'

FOOTBALL AFRICA
An interesting and well-produced full-colour book on African football. Well-written and closely-researched.
Softback Price £15.99 Postage Rate 'C'

THE PHILLYS AFRICAN FOOTBALL YEARBOOK 1998
Excellent statistical yearbook of African International football including line-ups and a players' who's who.
Softback Price £12.99 Postage Rate 'B'

NORTH & LATIN AMERICAN FOOTBALL GUIDE 96/97
The 4th edition contains over 400 pages of information.
Softback Price £27.50 Postage Rate 'C'

Also available – Postage Rate 'C' : –

1995/96	NORTH & LATIN AMERICAN GUIDE	£27.50
1994/95	NORTH & LATIN AMERICAN GUIDE	£25.00
1993/94	NORTH & LATIN AMERICAN GUIDE	£22.50

FOOTBALL HOOLIGAN TITLES

FOOTBALL HOOLIGANS – KNOWING THE SCORE
A serious study of the groups of football hooligans who follow Sheffield United.
Softback Price £14.99 Postage Rate 'C'

AMONG THE THUGS
Well-written look at football hooliganism that examines the experience and attractions of crowd violence.
Softback Price £6.99 Postage Rate 'A'

STEAMING IN – JOURNAL OF A FOOTBALL FAN
Bestseller about hooliganism as seen from the inside.
Softback Price £5.99 Postage Rate 'A'

DERBY DAYS
A 4th title by the brothers Dougie and Eddie Brimson which examines hooliganism at local 'derby' matches.
Softback Price £6.99 Postage Rate 'A'

CAPITAL PUNISHMENT
The 3rd book by the Brimson brothers gives an in-depth account of football hooliganism in London.
Softback Price £6.99 Postage Rate 'A'

EVERYWHERE WE GO
The Brimson Brothers' first book on Hooliganism.
Softback Price £6.99 Postage Rate 'A'

ENGLAND, MY ENGLAND
The Brimson Brothers' second book looks at hooliganism as caused by some England 'fans'.
Softback Price £6.99 Postage Rate 'A'

10% DISCOUNT ON ORDERS OVER £60

STATISTICAL HISTORIES

A series of A4-sized, photocopied and slide-bound softback statistical histories with year-by-year League tables, club histories and club information.

Each title is priced £9.99 – Postage Rate 'B'

Albania 1930-1997 | Austria 1911-1997 | Belgium 1895-1997
Bulgaria 1937-97 | Cyprus 1934-97 | Czechoslovakia 1925-93
Denmark 1889-1997 | Eire 1921-1997 | East Germany 1948-1992
England 1871-1932 | England 1932-1965 | England 1965-date
Finland 1930-1997 | France 1932-97 | Germany 1902-44/1991-97
Greece 1921-97 | Holland 1888-1954 | Holland 1954-1997
Hungary 1901-1997 | Iceland 1912-1997 | Italy 1898-1997
Luxembourg 1909-1997 | Malta 1909-1997 | N. Ireland 1890-1997
Norway 1902-1997 | Poland 1921-1997 | Portugal 1921-1997
Romania 1921-1997 | Scotland 1890-1945 | Scotland 1947-1997
Spain 1928-1997 | Sweden 1896-1997 | Switzerland 1897-1997
Turkey 1922-1997 | U.S.S.R. 1936-1991 | Wales 1877-1997
West Germany 1945-1991 | Yugoslavia 1923-1997
Lithuania 1922-1997 | Estonia 1921-1997 | Latvia 1921-1997
San Marino, Liechtenstein & Faroe Islands (1 book) | Slavic Republics
Argentina Prof. League 1931-97 | Peru 1926-97 | Uruguay 1900-97
Brazil Nat. Champs. 1900-97 | *Chile 1933-97* | *Colombia 1948-97*

INTERNATIONAL LINE-UPS & STATISTICS

A series of A5-sized softback books with full match-by-match listings of opponents, venues, line-ups, dates, scores & scorers of international games.

Each Title is Priced £5.95 – Postage Rate 'A'

Argentina 1902-1970 | Brazil 1914-1970 | Brazil 1971-1996
Canada 1885-1995 | Colombia 1938-1996 | Ecuador 1938-1997
Eire 1921-1996 | England 1872-1960 | England 1961-1996
Israel 1934-1995 | New Zealand 1885-1995 | Northern Ireland 1882-1997
Paraguay 1919-1996 | Peru 1927-1996 | Scotland 1872-1960
U.S.A. 1885-1995 | Wales 1876-1960 | Wales 1961-1996
Olympic Football 1900-1964 | Olympic Football 1968-1996

http://www.soccer-books.co.uk
e-mail – info@soccbook.demon.co.uk

ORDERING INFORMATION

DELIVERY – UK 1-2 weeks • Europe 2-4 weeks • North America 4-7 weeks • Elsewhere up to 10 weeks • Airmail to all parts, 3-12 days.

PAYMENT – We accept: All Major Credit Cards • £ Sterling Cheques, Money Orders, Postal Orders, Switch & Delta debit cards or Cash • US $ Cheques, Drafts and Money Orders • Irish £ Cheques & Postal Orders • Eurocheques made out in £ Sterling • Overseas Currency Banknotes for many countries at current Tourist Selling Rates.

GIRO Account Numbers (Please note that all Giro Accounts are in the name of J.M. & G. Robinson) – U.K. 278-2952 • Denmark 748-9498 • France 3778900 • Holland 311-0730 • Norway 0806-1915487 • Sweden 5470-50-5

Postage Rate	A	B	C	D
UK Postage	£0.75	£1.50	£2.50	£3.50
Surface Postage	£1.50	£2.50	£3.50	£6.00
Airmail Postage	£3.00	£5.00	£7.00	£11.00
	Maximum UK Postage £4.50			

ORDER FORM

(152) TITLES | PRICE £ p | POST £ p

FROM:

COST
ORDERS OVER £60 LESS 10%
SUBTOTAL
+POST
TOTAL

Send to:
SOCCER BOOKS LTD. (WORLD SOCCER),
72 ST. PETERS AVENUE,
CLEETHORPES,
DN35 8HU. ENGLAND
Tel: (01472) 696226
(24 Hour Orderline)
Fax: (01472) 698546

Please make cheques payable to Soccer Books Limited
I enclose cheque/cash/British P.O. for the amount shown
I have paid into Giro Account Number ..... ☐

I wish to pay by Credit Card ☐ Expiry date.....
MasterCard Visa Amex Switch Delta
Card Number : – Switch Issue N° .....

10% DISCOUNT
For World Soccer Subscribers
Quote your subscription code

SPAIN

Basquing in glory

Graham Turner on how the season brought triumph for the Catalans and fortune for Luis Fernandez and Athletic Bilbao

HEARD the one about the club that reacted to the Bosman ruling by insisting they'd only employ local players? Then got into the Champions League just as they were celebrating their centenary? Yeah, sure. Roy of the Rovers this isn't.

That sort of joking would be considered decidedly unfunny in Bilbao, where the sight of Basques going bananas after a 1-0 home win against Zaragoza made manager Luis Fernandez forget both his Andalusian roots and his French connections. He is now an honorary Basque, and deservedly so after masterminding an incredible achievement. That win on the last Sunday of the season secured Bilbao second position in the League and a place on the Champions League starting grid. Their Basque rivals Real Sociedad finished third, leaving centralist, multinational Real Madrid languishing in fourth place and dependent on victory over Juventus in Amsterdam to get back into the Champions League money-box next year.

Athletic Bilbao will be no easy touch in next season's tournament. They pressurise opponents with the same whipper-snapper enthusiasm which Luis Fernandez displayed during his own playing days. Roberto Rios, Rafael Alkorta, Jose Mari *et al* give the team muscle power, while Julen Guerrero and Bittor Alkiza provide the finery in the form of a subtle back-up to live-wire striker Joseba Etxeberria. Nobody will feel comfortable at San Mames, where a pitch-invasion greeted the final victory. "When we play here, we have the whole Basque nation behind us," said jubilant club president Jose María Arrate.

It has to be said that Athletic's 17-14-7 record is not so different from the 16-16-10 of last season which was only good enough to earn eighth place. Real Madrid finished up with 17 wins – ten fewer than in the previous campaign masterminded by Fabio Capello, hot favourite to take the reins back from the beleaguered Jupp Heynckes.

Clinched...Bilbao make it to the Champions' League

Under-achievement was the all-too-common denominator of the 1997-98 campaign in which Barcelona cruised home despite losing 10 times. Basque successes based on using home-grown players combined with the resounding failure of most of the post-Bosman multinationals could provoke a serious rethink in many Spanish boardrooms, particularly at a time when the Players' Union and the FA are campaigning for a five-man cap on imports. Even Tenerife, with a seemingly star-studded squad, needed a late penalty in their last match to clinch salvation with a 3-2 win over Valencia. In all-too-many dressing-rooms the mass recruitment of foreign mercenaries provoked more star wars than star performances. Merida, beaten 2-0 by Celta in their last game, were relegated along with Sporting Gijon, while Oviedo and Compostela went into the play-offs against Las Palmas and Villareal.

In the meantime, Barcelona made it a League-and-Cup double with a dramatic penalty shoot-out win against a plucky Mallorca side who looked better organised for much of the final. Hector Cuper's side hustled and tackled Barça out of their stride and, having taken a sixth-minute lead through Stankovic, looked the more likely winners, as Van Gaal's men struggled to cope with the pressure. However, Mallorca's commitment was dangerously dependent on the 'tactical foul' in Barcelona's creative areas and was ultimately to prove their undoing. After Rivaldo equalised in the 66th minute, Mena was sent off six minutes before the end of normal time and Romero three minutes into extra time. Barcelona hit the woodwork twice but nine-man Mallorca held on for the penalty shoot-out.

Mallorca keeper Carlos Roa, given permission by Argentina to skip their match against Brazil, rounded off a magnificent performance by saving the first spot kick from Rivaldo. But in reply, Ivan Rocha then shot high and wide. Giovanni and Soler made it 1-1; Pizzi and Olaizola made it 2-2; Roger and Roa 3-3; then Roa saved from Figo. Up stepped Stankovic needing to score to win. Hesp went off to his right; Stankovic shot the other way... and past the post. Oscar and Amato made it 4-4; Reiziger converted the first penalty of his life to make it 5-4; and when Hesp saved Eskurza's shot with a knee, Barça had won the the Copa del Rey. It's been that sort of season...

Honorary member...Bilbao's adopted Basque leader, Luis Fernandez

Fan Wear

0171 207 2758

Holland Just Do It T-shirts White/BlueS-XXL £18.99

Holland NK 250 KNVB Football Size 5 £14.99

Brazil Global Cap Yellow & Green/ White & Blue OSFA £9.99

Brazil Just Do It T-shirts White/Grey S-XXL £18.99

Brazil Badge Cap Yellow/White OSFA £9.99

Holland Global T-shirts Orange/Black S-XXL £16.99

Brazil Global T-shirts Yellow/Blue S-XXL £16.99

Holland Global Cap Orange & Black/ Blue & Black OSFA £9.99

Holland Badge Cap Orange/Black OSFA £9.99

Retro Back Pack £15.99

Brazil NK 250 CBF Football Size 5 £14.99

Delivery Bag £19.99

England Emblem Cap Black OSFA £9.99

England France 98 T-shirts Marine S-XL £14.99

Scotland Chalk T-shirts Black S-XXL £14.99

England Chalk T-shirts Black S-XXL £14.99

World Cup Trophy Cap Black OSFA £9.99

France Chalk T-shirts Black S-XXL £14.99

USA Badge Cap Navy/Red OSFA £9.99

Nigeria Global T-shirts White/Green S-XXL £16.99

USA Global T-shirts Red/Grey S-XXL £16.99

Italy Badge Cap Navy/Royal OSFA £9.99

Nigeria Badge Cap Leaf/Dark Green OSFA £9.99

Italy Just Do It T-shirts White/BlueS-XXL £18.99

Italy Global Cap Navy/Royal/ White & Navy OSFA £9.99

Retro World Cup Shirts Brazil/Germany France/Holland S-XL £29.99

Italy Global T-shirts White/Blue S-XXL £16.99

England Great Goal T-shirts White S-XXL £14.99

England 3 Lions T-shirts White S-XXL £14.99

Italy NK 250 ITA Football Size 5 £14.99

TO ORDER call the hotline now on 0171 207 2758 or to get a copy of our free mail order catalogue, send a stamped addressed envelope to SOCCER EQUIPE, TEMPO HOUSE, 15 FALCON ROAD, LONDON SW11 2PJ or call in to our new store today at 1 FALCON ROAD, LONDON SW11 2PH.

Soccer Equipe

VISA DELTA AMERICAN EXPRESS MasterCard SWITCH

FRANCE

Lens and Metz… short names, big deeds

The small clubs have the most to shout about

LENS did it in the end, by the merest whisker. The weekend after losing the French Cup Final to a much superior and more relaxed Paris Saint Germain at the new Saint Denis Stadium, they managed to draw at Auxerre, and thus edge out Metz on goal difference, Metz having beaten Lyon 1-0. Lens and Metz will participate in the forthcoming Champions League and both fully deserve it.

With such limited resources, they have put the big battalions to shame. Indeed, Lens rejoiced in beating the Marseilles and Monacos of this world, often on their own grounds. Their inspirational manager, the Big Blond, Daniel Leclercq, got more out of them than anyone imagined would be possible, but in the final, with the intimidatory presence of 77,000 fans, and with Leclercq mistakenly fiddling with his tactics, things went wrong.

So everything, the whole season, depended on not losing that last game at Auxerre who, curiously enough, were the previous unfashionable club not only to get within range of the Cup and League double, but to do it.

The fact that Lens, by their players' own frank admission, found it so hard to play in Saint Denis makes you wonder what they are capable of doing in the Champions Cup, where such conditions will often be replicated. "We were in doubt from the start," admitted Marc Vivien Foe. "We didn't believe in our possibilities and we lacked experience. When you don't play as you know how to, you lose your chief strength."

"We never managed to completely free ourselves," said defender Frederic Dehu, who is said to have attracted the attention of Alex Ferguson of Manchester United. He is also keen on Foe.

An over-cautious Leclercq switched Dehu from his habitual position on the right of midfield to a sweeper role in the final, thereby virtually conceding the midfield, a situation made worse for Lens by the fact that the Brazilian Rai, in his last season in Paris, constantly drew his marker upfield with him, heading the first goal into the bargain.

PSG redeemed their season with Cup success but made a shamefully inept League start from which they never recovered. Monaco looked potential champions for a time, then seemed to devote themselves to the European Cup, in which they performed with honour, knocking out Manchester United and giving Juventus a beating in the second leg of the semi-final.

Marseille shelled out a lot of money for Fabrizio Ravanelli but he could not bring them either the goals or the success they needed.

Metz, meanwhile, deserve as much praise as Lens for their stupendous season. It's a shame they are so unlikely to hold on to their most influential attacking midfielder, Robert Pires, urgently wanted by several French clubs of greater means, and by Arsenal's Wenger.

Andre Duclos

Just champion…Lens' Frederic Dehu and Anto Drobnjak celebrate their title triumph

GERMANY

Party time as Brehme bows out

'People will talk about this for years,' says Kaiserslautern's Rehhagel

THE Bundesliga season ended in a carnival atmosphere for unfancied Kaiserslautern, who won the championship in their first season back, after winning promotion a year ago.

Andreas Brehme, making his farewell appearance at the age of 37, collected the trophy before a delirious crowd, with coach Otto Rehhagel saying: "If anybody had predicted, two years ago, that we would be where we are today, we'd have laughed at him.

"What we have achieved is extraordinary. People will talk about it for years and years."

A 1-1 draw away to Hamburg was a somewhat disappointing finale for Brehme and the others, but they had clinched the title a week earlier by beating Wolfsburg 4-0. 'King Otto' has now won the Bundesliga three times, having done so twice with Werder Bremen, a club he also took to the Cup-winners Cup.

He did not mention Bayern Munich, who finished second, but he must have been savouring revenge. They sacked him two years ago, and he moved to Kaiserslautern, who had just been relegated. Without fuss, but with plenty of hard work, he led them first to promotion and then the senior title – they are the first promoted club ever to win it at the first attempt – and a place in the Champions Cup next season.

So the Red Devils, as the club are known, took the glory as Bayern, nicknamed Hollywood FC, lost their grip on the title amid a renewed outbreak of disputes and controversies.

Bayern ended their Bundesliga programme with a 4-0 defeat of Borussia Dortmund, and then went on to win the German Cup, beating Duisberg 2-1 with a last-minute goal by Mario Basler.

That was some consolation for coach Giovanni Trapattoni, who now returns to Italy to take over at Fiorentina, and is replaced by former Dortmund coach Ottmar Hitzfeld.

Trapattoni has had his problems, but at the finish he was congratulated by all the team, and said: "I can go back home a proud man."

Koln were one of the relegated clubs, 20 years after doing the League-Cup double. Karlsruhe, who played in the UEFA Cup this season, also went down, with Arminia Bielefeld, while Borussia Monchengladbach escaped by winning their last match. Bayer Leverkusen, Stuttgart and Schalke will play in the UEFA Cup in 1998-99.

● Attendances in the Bundesliga topped 10 million for the first time. The average per match was 32,375, up from 30,267.

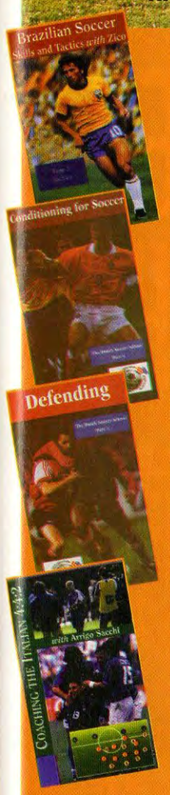
David Prole

Arms and legs…and flowers too as Kaiserslautern's champions celebrate

FORSPORT FOOTBALL EQUIPMENT SPECIALISTS FOR THE PRO-COACH

'COACH THE COACH!'

FORSPORT - THE TRAINING & COACHING EQUIPMENT SPECIALISTS PROVIDE A COMPREHENSIVE RANGE OF TOP QUALITY PRODUCTS TO HELP YOU BRING THOSE SESSIONS ALIVE



A selection from the range of training videos

COACHING VIDEOS

- Brazilian Soccer - part 1: Skills & Techniques
  R1181 - Zico - £17.99
- Brazilian Soccer - part 2: Positional Play
  R1182 - Zico - £17.99
- Brazilian Soccer - part 3: Tactics
  R1183 - Zico - £17.99
- The Dutch 4x4 Training Method
  R0117 - £17.99
- Dutch Soccer School - part 1
  R0116 - Louis van Gaal/ Adriaansa/Ajax - £17.99
- Dutch Soccer School - part 2: Attacking from the back
  R0115 - 17.99
- Dutch Soccer School - part 3: Defending
  R0111 - Chris Dekker / Feyenoord - 17.99
- Dutch Soccer School - part 4: Conditioning
  R0112 - Foppe De Haan - 17.99
- Running Techniques for Soccer
  S0001 - FC Twente - 17.99
- Ajax Training Method - Coordination
  S0002 - Ajax - 17.99
- Ajax Training Method - Speed and Coordination
  S0003 - Ajax - 17.99
- The German Touch - part 1: Dribbling and Feinting
  R1381 - Schalke 04 - 17.99
- The German Touch - part 2: Playing with an opponent at your back
  R1382 - Schalke 04 - 17.99
- The German Touch - part 3: Consolidating Individual skills and ball control
  R1383 - Schalke 04 - 17.99
- German - Pattern Play - part 1
  R1261 - Otto Baric - £15.99
- German - Pattern Play -

TRAINING EQUIPMENT

- Footballs
  Competition Balls, Skill Balls, Training Balls, Leading brands such as: Mitre, Minerva, Surico, Uhlsport, Valsport. All sizes, various colours.
- Football Nets
- Football Net Bags
- Football Bags
- High Speed Football Inflators
- Fluro Training Waistcoat Bibs
  Printing available on all bibs
- Fluro Marker Cones & Poles
- Magnetic Tactic Boards
  Hand held and wall mounted versions.
- Training Hurdles & Hoops
- Mini Goals
- Training Walls
- Rebounders
  Great for Goalkeeper reaction skills. Can be used by outfield players for control exercises. Ability to be used by two players at once.
- Passing Arcs
- Heading Trellis
- Pendent Footballs
  For use with Heading Trellis
- Drink Bottles
- Medisport First Aid Kits

This is just a selection

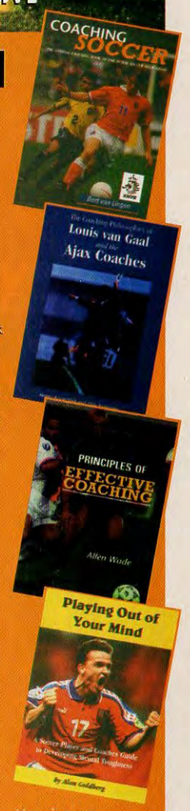
GOALKEEPING VIDEOS

- Dutch - The Soccer Goalkeeper part 1: Principles / Defending
  R2341 - Frans Hoek - £17.99
- Dutch - The Soccer Goalkeeper part 2: Principles / Distribution
  R2342 - Frans Hoek - £17.99
- Dutch - The Soccer Goalkeeper part 3: Goalkeeping Drills
  R2343 - Frans Hoek - £17.99

CREDIT CARD ORDERS WELCOME

COACHING BOOKS

- Youth Soccer Coaching
  R0001- Tony Carr - £12.99
- Dutch - The Official Coaching Book of the Dutch Soccer Association
  R0154 - £9.95
- Dutch - The Coaching Philosophies of Louis van Gaal & The Ajax Coaches
  R0175 - Louis Van Gaal - £9.95
- Dutch - Developing Soccer Players the Dutch Way
  R0267 - MVV / Feyenoord - £8.95
- Dutch Coaching Notebook
  R0284 - £9.95
- Dutch - Team Building
  R0287 - Dutch Coaches Various - £6.95
- Dutch Soccer Drills Vol 1
  R0193 - Richard Kentwell - £8.95
- Dutch Soccer Drills Vol 2
  R0194 - Richard Kentwell - 8.95
- Italian - Coaching 442 and Zone Play
  R0244 - Marzialli / Mora - £9.95
- Principles of Teaching Soccer
  R0148 - Allen Wad - £8.95
- Principles of Effective Coaching
  R0245 - Allen Wade - £8.95
- Positional Play - Back Defenders
  R2531 - Allen Wade - £8.95
- Positional Play - Midfield Players
  R2532 - Allen Wade - £8.95
- Positional Play - Strikers
  R2533 - Allen Wade - £8.95
- Positional Play - Goalkeepers
  R2534 - Allen Wade - £8.95
- Principles of Play
  R0246 - Allen Wade - £6.45
- Systems of Play
  R0247 - Allen Wade - £6.45
- Modern Tactical Development
  R0257 - Allen Wade - £6.45
- Soccer Coaching - The Great Game - Development & Tactics
  R0151 - Andy Caruso - £9.95
- The Manual Of Soccer



We have many coaching books available,

TO PLACE YOUR ORDER CALL
FORSPORT 0181-658 2007
PROFESSIONAL COACHING EQUIPMENT

SYLVESTER STALLONE HARVEY KEITEL RAY LIOTTA and ROBERT DE NIRO

COP LAND

WHICH BIG FOUR WOULD YOU RATHER WATCH?

SCOT LAND

RENT IT ON VIDEO FROM 9.6.98

© Buena Vista Pictures Distribution

Dutch destroyer...Marc Overmars scored the first FA Cup Final goal against Newcastle

ENGLAND Capital gains

London clubs sweep the board

THE END of the Premiership season in England marked a memorable, and long overdue, shift in the balance of power. After five years of northern dominance, with Manchester United winning the Premier League four times and Blackburn once, a southern club finally claimed English football's star prize.

Arsenal, it was, who ended that barren sequence and, to add insult to injury, they went on to add the FA Cup to their trophy haul – becoming only the second club, after United, to complete the double double – while Chelsea helped themselves to both the Coca-Cola Cup and the Cup-winners Cup.

However, while it was good news for teams south of the Watford Gap, the 1997-98 season may, in years to come, be seen as a warning sign to the English game. For while everything in the garden appears to be rosy, particularly with Chelsea's success in Europe – only the third by English clubs in the past 10 years – much of the credit for both Arsenal's and Chelsea's successes has to go to foreign imports.

Both are, of course, managed by foreigners – Frenchman Arsene Wenger at Highbury, who became the first foreign coach to manage an English championship-winning side, and Gianluca Vialli, one of the greatest Italian players of his generation, at Stamford Bridge.

Both fully deserve the plaudits that have come their way in recent weeks, as do the players of the two teams. But that is where things become even more worrying for the future development of the game in England.

Chelsea's winning goal in their European triumph over VfB Stuttgart came from Gianfranco Zola, another expensive acquisition from Italy, while Arsenal's scorers in their 2-0 FA Cup Final win over Newcastle were a Dutchman and a Frenchman – Marc Overmars and Nicola Anelka respectively.

The personal awards also went to Highbury, Holland's Dennis Bergkamp winning the Football Writers' Footballer of the Year and the PFA Player of the Year awards. And in claiming the writers' award, Bergkamp became the fourth successive foreigner to do so, following Jurgen Klinsmann in 1995, Eric Cantona in 1996 and Zola last year.

There is a flip side to that coin. For while the Premiership power-brokers will spend the summer shopping at the World Cup, and no doubt taking further advantage of the Bosman ruling to bring in cut-price foreigners, a record 600 players were freed by their clubs at the end of this season, more than double the number last year. The only thing they have to look forward to this summer is an anxious wait by the phone.

One man who will welcome the summer is Alan Shearer. He will be busy trying to help England win the World Cup, hopefully away from the kind of scrutiny which he has been under following his ugly challenge on Leicester's Neil Lennon, when he appeared to place a boot into his opponent's face.

The country was split as to his guilt, with his supporters claiming he was the victim of a witch-hunt, while his detractors were equally vociferous in their claims that Shearer was above the law.

The referee failed to see the incident and took no action against England's captain. TV evidence threw a slightly different light on the matter, though, and Shearer was duly charged by the FA. Several leading personalities then became embroiled in the row and a hearing was hurriedly arranged. Viewing footage from a third camera, not broadcast elsewhere, the FA cleared Shearer of any misdemeanour.

For Shearer's supporters, it was proof that their man was innocent. For his detractors, well, it wasn't. But, at least, the matter was resolved before the serious business in France got under way.

Elsewhere, relegation and promotion issues were decided with Crystal Palace, Bolton and Barnsley going down from the Premiership, to be replaced by Nottingham Forest, Middlesbrough and, via the play-offs, either Sunderland or Charlton. If it was Sunderland who completed the trio (the result was unknown at press time), then it would mean the three sides who went up from the First Division last year being replaced by the three who went down.

Finally, a last, sorry word for Manchester City, who were relegated from the First Division, the first time that they, once among English football's biggest clubs, have dropped out of the top two divisions. Proof, indeed, that biggest is not always best.

Ian Cruise

SCOTLAND

Jansen's triumph tarnished

AFTER several weeks of stuttering and stumbling, a weary Celtic side finally staggered over the finishing line to record their first championship win since 1988, with a nervy victory over St Johnstone.

Then the carnival atmosphere at Celtic Park as the fans celebrated the long-awaited end to a decade of Rangers' dominance was almost immediately deflated. Within 48 hours of the championship trophy having been presented, Celtic head coach Wim Jansen announced his resignation.

The decision was not unexpected following a series of hints dropped during the final weeks of the season, but few could have forecast the war of attrition which ensued. Jansen began to speak bitterly of his former employers, chairman Fergus McCann and general manager Jock Brown, both of whom responded with counter claims.

This damaging episode completely tarnished the success which the Celtic players had fought so hard to achieve.

Any hopes Rangers had of salvaging some glory from a ragged campaign were nullified when they lost the Scottish Cup Final to Hearts. The Edinburgh club's first major trophy since 1963 was just reward for their contribution to the domestic game this season. They had ensured that the League remained an exciting three-horse race.

Rangers, who failed to lift a trophy for the first time since 1986, now move into a new era, with former PSV coach Dick Advocaat replacing Walter Smith and a variety of players (Goram, Cleland, Durrant, McCoist, Laudrup) all having had their last games for the club.

Alan Fairley

WALES

Ten-men Bangor win a battle

IF TWO CLUBS aggregating 20 red cards and 181 yellows throughout the season meet in a cup final, it is not difficult to predict the outcome. Bangor City and Connah's Quay Nomads met in this year's Welsh Cup Final, and referee Ceri Richards showed one red card, to Bangor's Chris Whelan, and eight yellows in one of the roughest Finals for years.

The result went Bangor's way despite having only 10 men. Steve Futcher put Nomads ahead, but Ken McKenna equalised in the last minute. Goalless extra time led to a penalty shootout, with City keeper Dave Williams the hero with two stops in a 4-2 win.

Flint Town and Porthmadog were condemned to the drop along with Cemaes Bay and Welshpool.

Haverfordwest County manager Mark Hopkins has been dismissed, while Chris Marustik has left Rhayader Town and been replaced by Mark Pound.

Champions Barry Town, who finished with 104 points and a goal difference of 103, became one of the few clubs to go a whole season without losing a single League game.

Mel Thomas

N. IRELAND

Long wait over for Cliftonville

CLIFTONVILLE captured the Irish League for the third time in their history on the penultimate day of the season. They last won the title back in 1910, and had not won a major trophy since winning the Irish Cup in 1979.

The triumph was unexpected for in the previous season Cliftonville had struggled against relegation, and during the summer several of the best players had left the cash-strapped club which could not afford their wage demands.

Glentoran proved too strong for last year's winners Glenavon in the Irish Cup Final, with defender John Kennedy scoring the only goal in extra-time.

Roy Kitson

Jari clinches Ajax double

Litmanen hat-trick ruins Advocaat's PSV farewell

Litmanen...a title winner again

HOLLAND

CHAMPIONS Ajax thrashed PSV 5-0 in the Cup Final to complete a double. It was PSV's last chance to earn a prize and give Glasgow-bound coach Dick Advocaat a good farewell.

Instead, the game ended in great disappointment for the Eindhoven side, with Jari Litmanen scoring three goals and Andre Ooijer being sent off.

With both top clubs playing in the Champions League next season, a play-off between defeated semi-finalists Heerenveen and Twente was staged to decide which club will be in the Cup-winners Cup. Until the last matches of the season Heerenveen looked certain to reach the UEFA Cup, but let it slip away. Against Twente, however, they came up to expectations and won 3-1.

Willem II earned the final UEFA Cup spot after a late run, and join Feyenoord and Vitesse. The latter finished third, and are still unbeaten in their futuristic Gelredome, despite the visits of Holland's main clubs. Their win over newly-crowned champions Ajax was marred by a shameful incident involving Edwin van der Sar, the visiting goalkeeper. He was hit by a missile and knocked out. The Arnhem club escaped without punishment.

At the bottom, MVV escaped a play-off with Second Division teams, because RKC suffered a dramatic last-minute defeat at Heerenveen. This means that the Waalwijk club and FC Groningen will face a nervous end to the season.

Klaas-Jan Droppert

GREECE

Another 'fixing' row

MATCH-FIXING allegations, not unknown in Greece, flew around again as the season ended with some decidedly odd results.

Olympiakos Piraeus were champions for the second successive time, and the 27th in all, but their feat was overshadowed by the accusations.

Sports Under-Secretary Andreas Fouras is to investigate, but says: "Greek soccer has been diseased for years. We did not need to wait until the end of the season to realise that."

Ethnikos Piraeus were the team to benefit most. They won 1-0 away to PAOK, who had not lost at home for two years but were booed off the pitch, and then won their final match 1-0 against Prodevtiki, the goal coming in the fourth minute of injury time.

These results enabled Ethnikos to escape relegation, but sent Panahaiki Patras down with Athinaikos Voronas and Kalamata, whose fate had been decided a week earlier.

Lou Economopoulos

BELGIUM

Genk's shock success

CLUB BRUGGE were the dominant force in Belgium this season, but the champions were brought down to earth in the Cup Final when they lost 4-0 to Genk – the biggest win in the Final since Standard Liege beat Lokeren by the same score in 1981.

For Genk, runners-up and the only club to stay within a respectable distance of Brugge, it was a first major honour.

They were formed in 1988 by the merger of Waterschei and Winterslag, and were promoted in 1996, only eight months after Aime Anthuenis had become coach.

The celebrations in Genk went on well past 4am and were in stark contrast to the despair of Antwerp fans, who invaded the pitch near the end of their final League game, at Lokeren. The match was abandoned and Lokeren, leading 2-1 at the time, were awarded a 5-0 win.

Antwerp were also fined £20,000 and they have appealed, but even if the plea succeeds it will make no difference. Antwerp are down, along with RWD Molenbeek.

● Anderlecht will play in next season's UEFA Cup after all. An arbitration panel has overturned the suspension imposed following allegations of bribery in the semi-final against Nottingham Forest in 1984. Ekeren are Belgium's other representatives.

Nicholas Harling

PORTUGAL

Souness shares Porto's glory

FC PORTO are champions of Portugal for the fourth successive season, but Graeme Souness has stolen much of the glory through his achievements since becoming coach of Benfica.

He lifted the club to second place, and European qualification, and at one stage the championship did not look beyond his team, although eventually they finished nine points behind.

Porto are not the power they used to be and owed a lot to Brazilian forward Artur. He scored vital goals in several games, including two against Benfica in a match Porto might well have lost.

Guimaraes deserve credit for finishing third, ahead of Sporting Lisbon and Maritimo.

Alberto da Silva

TURKEY

Terim conquers

FATIH TERIM – whose name means Conqueror – coached Galatasaray to a second successive championship, finishing five points ahead of Fenerbahce.

It was a convincing triumph for Terim, who said: "Even when we were nine points behind Fenerbahce at one stage we never lost confidence. Every man in the team plays for all the others. Dissent is a thing of the past."

Hakan Sukur, who scored 38 goals last season, was again League top scorer with 32, and was given excellent support by 18-year-old Emre Belozoglu, who had an effect almost every time he appeared as a substitute.

Fenerbahce, frequently criticised for a lack of scoring power, signed Elvir Balic from Bursaspor to line up alongside his fellow-Bosnian and near-namesake, Elvir Bolic. The fee, a Turkish record, was £6million for Bursaspor and £2million for Balic, on a two-year contract.

Despite Balic's arrival, Fenerbahce fired coach Otto Baric just before the season ended.

Trabzonspor, who are paying manager Gordon Milne £400,000 for 12 months, finished third, 10 points behind the champions.

Besiktas won the Cup but were sixth in the table, and several players left after rows with coach John Toshack

Hasan Cemali

AUSTRIA

Grazer stay on line

STURM GRAZ could do little right after being crowned as the first League Champions from the province of Styria. Losing 1-0 at home to Rapid did not help neighbours Grazer AK, but they stayed on course for runners-up spot by beating a poor FK Austria by the same score.

The Viennese 'Violets' have had one of their worst seasons since 1945. Seventh place is way out of the European reckoning.

Rapid saved their season with a late spurt and on the final Saturday took full points in Innsbruck, and second place.

GAK won in Lustenau to secure a UEFA Cup place, and Sturm had little difficulty accounting for the 'fusioned club', the merger of Admira-Wacker and neighbours VfB Modling a year ago having failed.

Bob Vaughan

IN BRIEF

VALLETTA retained the title in Malta by winning their last match. Birkirkara led by one point, but Valletta beat them 2-1, watched by 16,000, to finish first for the 16th time. Birkirkara, who have never won the title, may now sign ex-Aston Villa forward Tony Daley. *Domenico Aquilina*

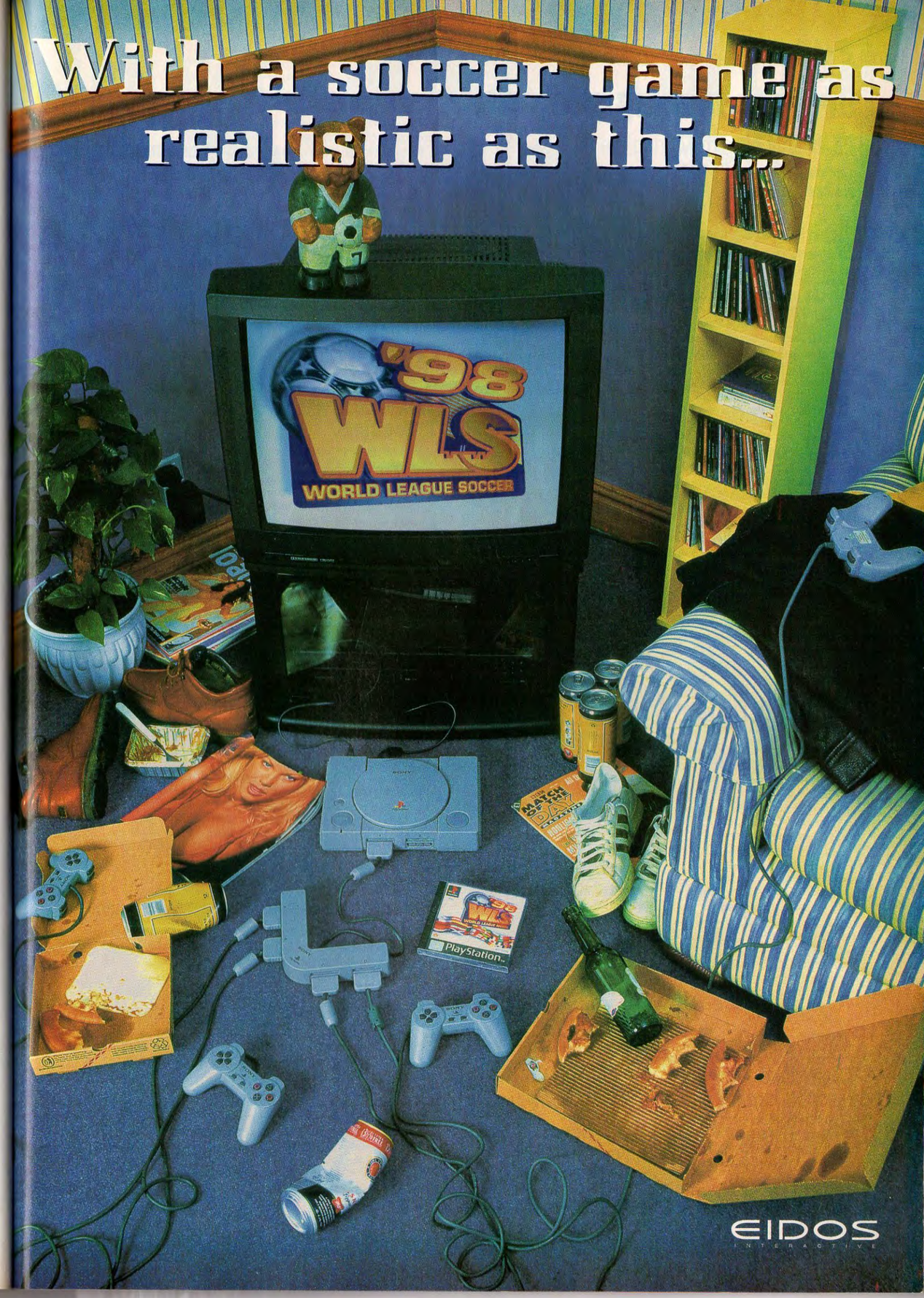
BETAR JERUSALEM retained the championship in Israel, finishing a point ahead of Hapoel Tel Aviv.

A week earlier the FA had inquired into Betar's 3-2 win over Hapoel Beit She'an, which was achieved by a last-minute goal. The report into the match said no criminal wrong-doing had been found, but could not explain "the lack of commitment by Beit Sha'an players" in the late stages.

Maccabi Haifa won the State Cup, beating surprise finalists Hapoel Jerusalem 2-0. *Ori Lewis*

THE Liechtenstein national under-16 squad beat Bulgaria and Azerbaijan to qualify for the world championship for the first time.

The senior team's coach, Alfred Riedel, has been released six months early in order to become national coach of Vietnam. *Graeme Crawford*



Orgryte making progress

Double success may bring the fans back

SWEDEN

ORGRYTE had never won a local derby against IFK Gothenburg during the 90s, but managed it twice within a few days, in the Swedish Cup and then in the League.

After being two down in the League game, they won 5-2, with midfielder Svante Samuelsson grabbing a hat-trick.

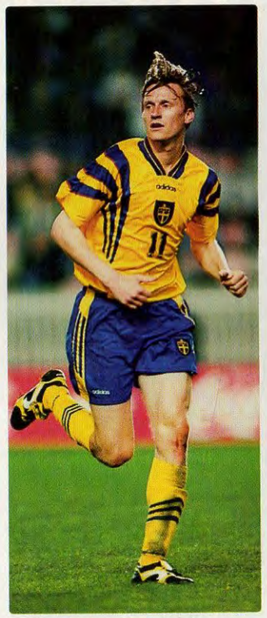
Although a classic name in Sweden, Orgryte have had alarmingly low gates in recent years. Their fans also are thought to be among the oldest in the country.

"For some reason we have been tagged as a dull team," says influential midfielder Magnus Kallander. "But we now play exciting football, our morale is high, and when the word spreads the fans will come flooding back."

With a progressive coach in Bosse Backman, this could be a good year for Orgryte, who have won the title only once – in 1985 – in the past 70 years.

International Kennet Andersson has decided to remain at Bologna in spite of interest from bigger clubs. He will be joined by compatriot Klas Ingesson from Bari.

Pentti Hietanen



Big in Bologna...Kennet Andersson

REP IRELAND

St Pat's snatch title

ST PATRICK'S snatched the Premier Division title from Dublin rivals Shelbourne in the closing minutes of the last game of the season.

Shels travelled to Dundalk two points clear, but went down 2-1, while St Pat's had a 2-1 away win over relegated Kilkenny City. The win was a triumph for 30-year-old Pat Dolan in his first full season in charge.

Meanwhile Brian Kerr, a former St Pat's manager, can do no wrong. Having taken the Republic Under-20 team to third place in the World Cup last year, he has now led the Irish to their first competitive tournament win, the Under-16s beating Italy in the European Final in Perth.

Sean Creedon

BULGARIA

Champions Liteks survive inquiry

NOTHING is as it looks in Balkan football politics and even when you have the points in the bag, top the table and cannot be caught, you are not yet sure of taking the title.

That is what happened to the surprise team of the season, Liteks Lovech, taking 59 points from 30 matches, five more than Levski and eight more than CSKA. On the last weekend Botev Plovdiv were beaten and that should have been that.

Levski, however, claimed Liteks had illegally fielded international defender Radostin Kishishev following his transfer home from Bursaspor. The Bulgarian Football Union hesitated to proclaim Liteks champions and Levski threatened to take the 'illegal transfer' to FIFA.

The BFU disqualified Liteks from the Cup semi-final and ordered CSKA to play Levski in the Final, which Levski won 5-0 in front of 45,000 spectators to qualify for Europe.

Liteks were docked only two points for using Kishishev, so the first promoted club for five decades to win the League enter the Champions League qualifiers, an astonishing achievement.

Whether they will be able to hang on to their best players – at least one, Ivailo Petkov, looks certain to be in the final World Cup squad – and whether European home ties can be played in Lovech are the next questions for the tiny provincial surprise packets.

Bob Vaughan

SLOVAKIA

Then there were four...

AS KOSICE and Trnava battled out the last weeks of the Championship, the 'Waltz of the Trainers' continued and struggling Slovan sacked their successor to Dusan Galis, Jozef Protchotsky, the former Senec player, previously in charge at Petrzalka.

With assistant Jan Svehlik caretaking for the time being at the Telehne pole, only four top division clubs had not changed coach in 1997-98 – and Galis was threatening to leave Trnava!

His assistant, Jozef Adamec, had had enough some six games from the end and resigned.

One post already re-filled is that of FA president. Milan Sluzani was expected not to stand again, but did so and beat Josef Venglos by a narrow margin in the poll.

Bob Vaughan

CZECH REPUBLIC

Two 'tiddlers' in the Final

SLAVIA were unable to mount a meaningful challenge to Sparta in the League, and there will be no Cup-winners Cup place for them, either.

They will have to be content with the UEFA Cup – unless they slip very badly in the last three matches – after being surprisingly beaten by Drnovice in the Cup semi-final. The 'Villagers' will not meet Moravian neighbours Boby Brno, who went out to Jablonec in the second semi-final.

The unlikely Cup Final pairing means a 'minnow' in the Cup-winners Cup. There will be questions about venue, as there were when Viktoria Zizkov entertained Chelsea, if Drnovice or Jablonec happen to draw a big fish.

Drnovice recently staged an Under-21 international with the Republic of Ireland, but perhaps it would be better if a switch were made to Brno.

Jozef Chovanec's national squad went to Asia to provide South Korea with some World Cup practice and to shake down his team for the autumn Euro 2000 qualifying games. Czech football cannot afford another failure to qualify.

Bob Vaughan

HUNGARY

Cup consolation for MTK

THIS has been a poor season for MTK, who won last year's title by a street but were never in contention this time.

Losing at home to Haladas put even fifth place in jeopardy, but at least all came good in the 73rd minute of the Cup Final, when Kuttor scored the only goal against League leaders Ujpest.

Ferencvaros are chasing hard, but ETO, who had led for much of the season, seemed likely to miss a UEFA Cup placing.

At the foot of the table Stadler are down and Tiszakecske nearly doomed. Videoton and Bekescsaba are still in trouble, too, but Honved look safe.

Bob Vaughan

ROMANIA

Steaua do a treble

FOR MUCH of the season Rapid looked to have a good chance of the title and entry to the Champions League preliminaries, but Steaua upset them with an unexpected win in Craiova.

On the penultimate day, Steaua could only draw at already-demoted Sportul, while the 'Railwaymen' were comfortably beating Foresta Falticeni.

So on the last day of the title chase Rapid had to win at Craiova, where 'U' had nothing to play for and clearly would not want any injuries before the Cup Final, also against Rapid.

'U' held Rapid 2-2 while Steaua had an easy home win over Gloria Bistrita, 5-2, to become champions for the third season running.

Rapid have the consolation of the Cup. Coach Mircea Lucescu can be well satisfied with his season's work after taking over last summer, when Rapid had failed in the InterToto. With any luck he could have done the Double.

IN BRIEF

FORMER international defender Murtaz Khurtsilava has taken over as manager of Dynamo Tbilisi in **GEORGIA**, after incidents involving David Kipiani. The club have been docked five points after Kipiani came to blows with supporters of two other clubs.

Kipiani has been demoted to a lower position and Khurtsilava, who played for the USSR for 10 years, has been brought in.

Vladimir Kalinkovich

IN **BELARUS**, four leading clubs have been 'nationalised' because their owner has withdrawn his sponsorship. Yevgenyi Khvastovich had controlled six-times champions Minsk Dynamo, Ataka, Dynamo 93 and Molodechno, but recently there had been financial difficulties.

Vladimir Kalinkovich

IN **ALBANIA**, leaders Vllaznia Shkodra missed a chance to clinch the title when losing 1-0 to Shkumbini Peqini – their first defeat in 17 games.

Vllaznia are still odds on, leading Partizani Tirana by seven points with three games left. They suffered an even bigger shock in the Albanian Cup when losing the second leg 5-0 to FK Lushnja, after winning the first 3-0. Apolonia Fieri also reached the Final, with a 2-1 defeat of KS Laci.

Gezim Nushi

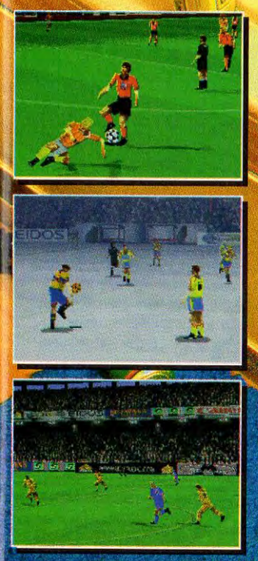
...it's easy to get carried away!

If you find yourself having a communal post-match bath round your mates house, don't panic. You've probably just had a palm-sweating, pulse-pounding, ultra-realistic World Cup semi-final on World League Soccer - the best ever soccer game to hit your PC.

WLS takes 3D football games to a new level of excellence. Stunningly presented with attention to detail that will mesmerise you including:-

- Motion-capture featuring Les Ferdinand
- Realistic camera angles
- Amazing 30 frames per second
- Post-pub satisfying 4 player capabilities

So get in the beer, order the pizza and turn on the hot water ...it's time for kick-off!



'98 WLS WORLD LEAGUE SOCCER

PlayStation

Mizuno

Silicon Dreams

EIDOS

Also available on PC CD & SEGA SATURN

World League Soccer © 1998 Silicon Dreams © & © Eidos Interactive Limited. All Rights Reserved. "PS" and "PlayStation" are trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc.

SOCCER BOOKS LIMITED

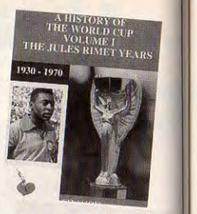
WORLD CUP BOOKS SPECIAL

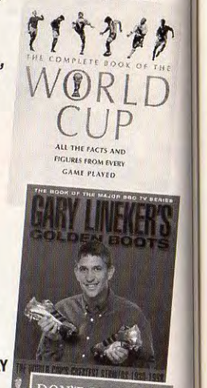
HISTORY OF THE WORLD CUP VOL. 1 1930-1970 *Hardback £26.00 Postage Rate 'C'*
First part of a full statistical record of the World Cup, with every game in the Qualifiers and Finals. 400 pages & 200 photos.

THE COMPLETE BOOK OF THE WORLD CUP *Softback Price £14.99 Postage Rate 'D'*
An interesting, well-illustrated history of the World Cup with a write-up of every final series game together with statistics.

GARY LINEKER'S GOLDEN BOOTS *Hardback Price £17.99 Postage Rate 'D*
The excellent book of the major new BBC TV series in which Gary Lineker travels around the world to interview 21 top scorers from the finals of past World Cup competitions. Includes many photographs.

DON'T CRY FOR ME ARGENTINA *Softback Price £9.99 Postage Rate 'B'*
Subtitled 'Scotland's 1978 World Cup Adventure', this is a detailed and well-written account of Scotland's 1978 World Cup.





1998 TITLES

SHOOT – THE ULTIMATE STATS AND FACTS GUIDE TO WORLD CUP 98
A 192-page handbook full of statistics and information about the 32 finalists for France 98.
Softback Price £4.99 Postage Rate 'A'

WORLD CUP '98 – A COMPLETE CHAMPIONSHIP GUIDE
A 304-page guide to the 1998 World Cup Finals including brief histories of previous tournaments and guides to 1998 venues. Also includes information about the 32 teams who have qualified for the finals.
Softback Price £4.99 Postage Rate 'B'

FIFA WORLD CUP BOOK
This new 80-page, large-sized book is an 'Official Licensed Product' for the 1998 World Cup. Full-colour, well-illustrated title includes player profiles and an analysis of the 32 finalists for 1998 in France.
Softback Price £6.99 Postage Rate 'B'

ENGLAND WORLD CUP GUIDE '98
Full-colour with over 150 photographs – this book is billed as the 'essential' guide for English fans.
Softback Price £7.99 Postage Rate 'B'

SCOTLAND WORLD CUP GUIDE '98
Full-colour with 100 photographs – this book is billed as the 'complete guide' to Scotland's 1998 campaign.
Softback Price £6.99 Postage Rate 'A'

1998 TITLES

WORLD CUP STARS – THE CUP'S FINEST PLAYERS
A handy little book about the World Cup's best players.
Softback Price £3.50 Postage Rate 'A'

WORLD CUP FACTS – THE FULL CUP RECORD
A small-sized record of World Cup facts and figures.
Softback Price £3.50 Postage Rate 'A'

ENGLAND WORLD CUP GLORY – FULL PROFILE AND PREVIEW
A profile and preview of England in the World Cup.
Softback Price £3.50 Postage Rate 'A'

SCOTLAND WORLD CUP GLORY – FULL PROFILE AND PREVIEW
A profile and preview of Scotland in the World Cup.
Softback Price £3.50 Postage Rate 'A'

GLENN HODDLE: THE ROAD TO FRANCE
Inside story of England's journey to the 1998 finals with interviews with Glenn Hoddle and key players.
Hardback Price £16.99 Postage Rate 'C'

THE OFFICIAL TEAM ENGLAND WORLD CUP BOOK
A large-sized, full-colour book which looks at all aspects of World Cup '98 including opponents, star players and how the team qualified for the finals.
Softback Price £7.99 Postage Rate 'B'

FRANCE '98 – ROUGH GUIDE WORLD CUP SPECIAL
Booklet with info about the cities where finals matches are to be played. *Softback £1.99 Postage Rate 'A'*

EARLIER TITLES

THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF WORLD CUP FOOTBALL
A U.S. published, large-sized 435-page history from 1930-1990 + a preview of the 1994 finals. Contains detailed line-ups and other interesting statistics.
Softback Price £16.95 Postage Rate 'D'

DANCING IN THE STREETS – TALES FROM WORLD CUP CITY
A interesting look at the 1994 World Cup finals in the U.S.A. which gives a fans-eye view of the events.
Softback Price £9.99 Postage Rate 'B'

FUßBALL-WELTMEISTERSCHAFT 1930 IN URUGUAY
A large-sized, German-language, well-illustrated history of the 1930 World Cup Competition.
Hardback Price £18.95 Postage Rate 'D'

FUSSBALL-WELTMEISTERSCHAFT 1938 – PARIS
A large-sized, German-language, well-illustrated history of the 1938 World Cup Competition.
Hardback Price £18.95 Postage Rate 'D'

THIS IS SOCCER – IMAGES OF WORLD CUP USA '94
A large-sized photographic book containing a variety of atmospheric pictures of the World Cup in America.
Softback Price £9.99 Postage Rate 'B'

THEY THINK IT'S ALL OVER...
A 200-page book of memories of the 1966 World Cup Final day. Written by Kenneth Wolstenholme.
Hardback Price £14.99 Postage Rate 'C'

10% DISCOUNT ON ORDERS OVER £60

LESS THAN HALF-PRICE SALE

SOCCER: THE WORLD CUP 1930-1994
The 192-page definitive history of the FIFA World Cup competition featuring write-ups of each series to 1994, all qualifying results and a full country-by-country record of Finals games.
Hardback Sale Price £5.50 (save £6.45) Postage Rate 'B'

THE BOYS OF '66 – ENGLAND'S LAST GLORY
The 1996 revised edition of the bestseller first published in 1986. No prizes for guessing what it is about!
Softback Sale Price £4.99 (save £5.00) Postage Rate 'B'

THE STORY OF THE WORLD CUP
The 352-page edition of Brian Glanville's noted history of the World Cup. Published in 1993.
Softback Sale Price £4.99 (save £5.00) Postage Rate 'C'

THE WORLD CUP – A COMIC BOOK HISTORY
A peculiar 96-page book which tells the history of the World Cup using comic-book style cartoons. Covers the period 1930 to 1990 and includes a preview of the 1994 Finals in the U.S.A.
Softback Sale Price £3.00 (save £3.99) Postage Rate 'A'

ENGLAND – THE QUEST FOR THE WORLD CUP
A 352-page complete record of England's attempts to win the World Cup up to and including the 1994 Competition.
Softback Sale Price £6.00 (save £6.95) Postage Rate 'C'

IRELAND – THE QUEST FOR THE WORLD CUP
A 256-page complete record of the Republic of Ireland's attempts to win the World Cup to 1994.
Softback Sale Price £3.99 (save £4.00) Postage Rate 'B'

SCOTLAND – THE QUEST FOR THE WORLD CUP
A 256-page record of Scotland's attempts to win the World Cup to 1994.
Softback Sale Price £4.95 (save £5.05) Postage Rate 'B'

http://www.soccer-books.co.uk
e-mail – info@soccbook.demon.co.uk

ORDERING INFORMATION

DELIVERY – UK 1-2 weeks • Europe 2-4 weeks • North America 4-7 weeks • Elsewhere up to 10 weeks • Airmail to all parts, 3-12 days.

PAYMENT – We accept: All Major Credit Cards • £ Sterling Cheques, Money Orders, Postal Orders, Switch & Delta debit cards or Cash • US $ Cheques, Drafts and Money Orders • Irish £ Cheques & Postal Orders • Eurocheques made out in £ Sterling • Overseas Currency Banknotes for many countries at current Tourist Selling Rates.

GIRO Account Numbers (Please note that all Giro Accounts are in the name of J.M. & G. Robinson) – U.K. 278-2952 • Denmark 748-9498 • France 3778900 • Holland 311-0730 • Norway 0806-1915487 • Sweden 5470-50-5

Postage Rate	A	B	C	D
UK Postage	£0.75	£1.50	£2.50	£3.50
Surface Postage	£1.50	£2.50	£3.50	£6.00
Airmail Postage	£3.00	£5.00	£7.00	£11.00
			Maximum UK Postage £4.50	

ORDER FORM

(WC) TITLES	PRICE £	PRICE p	POST £	POST p

Send to:
SOCCER BOOKS LTD. (WORLD SOCCER),
72 ST. PETERS AVENUE,
CLEETHORPES,
DN35 8HU. ENGLAND
Tel: (01472) 696226
(24 Hour Orderline)
Fax: (01472) 698546

FROM:

COST	
ORDERS OVER £60 LESS 10%	
SUBTOTAL	
+POST	
TOTAL	

Please make cheques payable to Soccer Books Limited
I enclose cheque/cash/British P.O. for the amount shown
I have paid into Giro Account Number ..... ☐

I wish to pay by Credit Card ☐ Expiry date.....
MasterCard Visa Amex Switch Delta
Card Number : – Switch Issue N° .....

10% DISCOUNT For World Soccer Subscribers Quote your subscription code

Controversial entry...Rai's arrival at Sao Paulo caused chaos in Brazil

BRAZIL

Rai's back in another charade

BRAZILIAN television personalities have few scruples about what they advertise. Top celebrities will happily go on screen and persuade the public to part with their money for almost anything.

But the limit surely came when Hebe Camargo, a sort of female Brazilian Terry Wogan, agreed to appear on behalf of the Paulista football federation and claim that "the Sao Paulo championship is the best organised in the world" – certainly one for the advertising standards authority.

The Paulista championship this year was, in fact, a farce. Most people stopped taking it seriously after seeing the way in which Corinthians overcame underdogs Portuguesa to reach the final.

The first leg of their semi-final had ended 1-1 and Portuguesa were 2-1 ahead when, in the 89th minute, their central defender Cesar calmly chested the ball down in the penalty area and cleared the danger – only for Argentine referee Javier Castrilli to award a penalty.

Portuguesa were so incensed they had three players sent-off for arguing, and caused a five-minute delay, before Freddy Rincon fired home to level the aggregate at 3-3 and send Corinthians into the final on account of having the better overall record.

The club, which as the name suggests represents the Portuguese community, responded by organising a campaign to boycott championship sponsors VR, a food voucher firm. Many Brazilian retailers are Portuguese-owned and the club reported that a large number in Sao Paulo had joined their campaign.

Paulista federation president Eduardo Farah said: "If I had the power, I would annull the game and order a replay." But, as he apparently does not have the power, Farah asked Corinthians if they would agree to face Portuguesa again. Not surprisingly, Corinthians said no.

Corinthians themselves were then on the wrong end of another bizarre incident. After winning the first leg of the final 2-1, they learned, at two days' notice, that Sao Paulo would be able to field Rai, one of Brazil's top players, in the second leg after signing him from Paris St. Germain.

The club's directors discovered there was no transfer deadline in the competition and took full advantage. Sao Paulo won the second leg 3-1 and Rai played a blinder, scoring the first goal and creating the second, as he effectively decided the title in his only appearance in the tournament.

However, at least the Paulista championship finished. Over in Rio de Janeiro, the Carioca championship staggered into oblivion because the federation kept changing the fixture list and the clubs started refusing to play in protest.

Vasco da Gama were given the first walkover in the history of the Maracana stadium when Botafogo failed to arrive for their game. Botafogo, who claimed they should have been playing Friburgense instead, announced beforehand they would not turn up but the federation pressed on anyway.

The stadium was opened, tickets were sold and match officials were present. The referee waited half an hour before awarding a 2-0 walkover win to Vasco.

Four days later, Flamengo and Fluminense both failed to turn up for their game, saying the federation had changed the venue from Maracana to Moca Bonita without consulting them. In the end, 2-0 defeats were awarded against both teams.

Flamengo's 'defeat' left Vasco da Gama needing three points from three games to win the third stage of the tournament and claim the title.

Vasco director Eurico Miranda claimed Flamengo, Fluminense and Botafogo knew they could not win the tournament and were trying to take some of the shine off Vasco's triupmh. Don't feel too sorry for Vasco, though. Miranda's close friendship with Rio federation president Eduardo Viana has for years allowed Vasco to get the best deal when the fixture list is drawn up, more or less allowing them to play their games in the order they want.

Brian Homewood

ARGENTINA

Judge stops play

Pressure group act over violence

THE organisation calling itself Fundacion Fair Play, which had been trying to stop soccer championships in Argentina since the end of February due to continued violence and the lack of positive steps to curb it, has been successful.

The organisation had taken its case to court and a judge, Victor Perrota, initially ruled that play could continue only if certain steps were taken to stop violence among fans. Some of these steps were not taken and the violence continued, so on May 14 Judge Perrota ordered the Argentinian FA to suspend the championships.

The FA, which has done little to curb violence, said it would appeal, while Judge Perrota was given police protection after receiving threats – not unexpected in a country where soccer means almost everything to a large part of the population.

At the time there were five games to go in the National Division championship, with three teams contesting the title, joint leaders Velez Sarsfield and Gimnasia y Esgrima de La Plata, and Lanus, two points behind.

Velez Sarsfield continued to look the most solid team, with Paraguayan international goalkeeper Jose Luis Chilavert continuing to save penalties and score vital goals from the spot and free-kicks. Chilavert has now scored no fewer than 21 goals in the League since August 1993.

River Plate, winners of the past three tournaments, were 10 points behind the leaders and virtually out of it. They continued to field mostly reserves, due to international calls and because they were concentrating more on the Libertadores Cup.

River Plate have renewed coach Ramon Diaz's contract for another two years, but have halved his bonuses – he had been getting double those earned by the players. But Diaz cannot complain. He earns £14,700 a month, plus a £666,000 annual fee.

Meanwhile, Boca Juniors dismissed coach Hector Veira. Since beating eternal rivals River Plate 3-2 on April 11, they have picked up one just point out of 12 and are now in the lower half of the table. Diego Maradona has offered to coach Boca again, after rejecting a £33,000-a-match offer to play for Olimpia pf Paraguay.

● IN COLOMBIA, a safety railing gave way and some 25 fans were injured when they fell on to seats below during the derby between Millonarios and Independiente Santa Fe in Bogota. National led Deportivo Cali by a point as the championship passed the halfway stage. The champions, America, have dropped down the table with four defeats in a row.

● IN CHILE, Temuco players walked out and their Argentinian coach, Reinaldo Merlo, resigned because the club owed them three months' salaries.

● IN URUGUAY, Penarol and Nacional are back in their usual places at the top after Nacional, who won their first four games, lost two in a row.

● IN PARAGUAY, players went on strike over freedom of contract, which affected three rounds of the First Division championship. The games were played by junior teams, with Olimpia losing their unbeaten record and the lead. Cerro Porteno took over.

● IN PERU, Universitario finished the first round unbeaten, but lost that record in their 13th match to Sport Boys, who lead by two points from Union Minas.

Eric Weil

IN BRIEF

No ref, so that's two more flights

THE STADIUM was full and the players were warming up for the second leg of a Libertadores Cup match between River Plate and Mexico's America in Buenos Aires, when the loudspeakers broke the bad news.

The game would not be played because the officials had not turned up.

Brazilian Marcio Rosende was due to control the game, and he later said he had received no advice from the South American Football Confederation.

America had to fly home for a League match, then fly back for the Cup game the next week, to lose 1-0 and go out on a 2-1 aggregate. This was a first for the Libertadores Cup, in which almost everything has happened over the years.

Carlos Fernando Navarro Montoya, a Colombian goalkeeper who played twice for his country but has spent most of his career in Argentina, has been battling for FIFA to let him play for Argentina.

Now he has gone through the courts and obtained an Argentinian judge's order, to FIFA and the FA, allowing him to play for that country.

FIFA do not allow players to represent more than one country and a civil judge's order is a novelty which is not likely to take effect.

At one time, national coach Daniel Passarella said he would pick Montoya if he were able to, but now he does not plan to do so.

Adidas Golden Shoe

Standings at May 1, 1998

NAME	GOALS SCORED
ALBANIA	
Hekuran Jakupa (Elbasani)	23
Dorian Bubeqi (Shkumbini Peqin)	19
Indrid Fortuzi (SK Tirana)	15
Erion Bogdani (Partizani Tirana)	13
Bardhyl Elezi (Lushnja)	12
ARMENIA	
Artur Petrosyan (Shirak Gyumri)	18
Sev ada Arzumanyan (OMM-Erebuni Yerevan)	13
Mkrtych Ovanesyan (Kotaik Abovyan)	11
Tigran Yesxayan (Yerevan)	10
Varazdat Avetisyan (Pyunik Yerevan)	10
AUSTRIA	
Geir Frigard (LASK)	21
Mario Haas (Sturm Graz)	16
Herfried Sabitzer (Grazer AK)	15
Hannes Reinmayr (Sturm Graz)	14
Ivica Vastic (Sturm Graz)	14
AZERBAIJAN	
Badri Gvaratskalia (Kepez Ganja)	19
Nazim Aliyev (Khazar Sumgait)	17
Vadim Vasilyev (Baki Fehlesi Mastagi)	12
Farukh Izmailov (Dynamo Baku)	11
Samir Musayev (SKA Baku)	9
BELARUS	
Andrei Klebosolov (Belshina Bobruisk)	19
Vladimir Makovsky (Dynamo Minsk)	16
Dmitry Balashov (Belshina Bobruisk)	15
Vladimir Solodukhin (Dnepr Mogilyov)	15
Andrei Turchinovich (Dynamo-93 Minsk)	15
BELGIUM	
Branko Strupar (Genk)	22
Tomasz Radzinski (Germinal Ekeren)	19
Gunther Hofmanns (Germinal Ekeren)	15
Souleyuman Oulare (Genk)	14
Peter Lassen (Eendracht Aalst)	14
BULGARIA	
Anton Spasov (Neftochimik Bourgas)	16
Boncho Genchev (CSKA Sofia)	15
Stefan Yurukov (Liteks Lovech)	13
Danilo Doncic (Lokomotiv Sofia)	12
Valentin Stanchev (Spartak Varna)	11
CROATIA	
Mate Baturina (Zagreb)	18
Vladimir Petrovic (Croatia Zagreb)	12
Mario Bazina (Hrvatski Dragovoljac)	12
Tomislav Erceg (Hajduk Split)	11
CYPRUS	
Rhinor Rauffman (Omonia Nicosia)	42
Vesko Michajlovic (Anorthosis Famagusta)	20
Dragan Music (Ethnikos Achna)	17
Marios Neophytou (AEL)	17
Sasa Jovanovic (APOP Paphos)	13
CZECH REPUBLIC	
Horst Siegl (Sparta Prague)	12
Pavel Penick (Jablonec)	11
Vratislav Lokvenc (Sparta Prague)	9
Radek Drulak (Sigma Olomouc)	9
Rudolf Otepka (Dukla)	9
DENMARK	
Ebbe Sand (Brondby)	27
Soeren Hermansen (AGF Aarhus)	17
Nocko Jokovic (Silkeborg)	13
Christian Lindberg (Ikast)	12
Lars Broegger (Ikast)	12
ENGLAND	
Viorel Moldovan (Coventry/Grasshopper)	19
Chris Sutton (Blackburn)	17
Dion Dublin (Coventry)	17
Michael Owen (Liverpool)	17
Kevin Gallacher (Blackburn)	16
Dennis Bergkamp (Arsenal)	16
Jimmy Floyd Hasselbaink (Leeds)	16

NAME	GOALS SCORED
ESTONIA	
Konstantin Kolbasenko (Tallinna Sadam)	15
Andres Oper (Flora Tallinn)	12
Toomas Krom (Tallinna Sadam)	11
FAROE ISLANDS	
Uni Arge (HB Torshavn)	24
John Petersen (B36 Torshavn)	16
Henning Jarnskor (Gotu)	16
Kurt Moerkoere (Klaksvik)	12
Pol Thorsteinsson (Vagi)	10
FINLAND	
Rafael (HJK Helsinki)	11
Jyrki Huhtamaki (VPS Vaasa)	10
Ismo Luis (RoPs Rovaniemi)	10
Petteri Kaijasilta (TPS Turku)	9
Marco (Jazz Pori)	9
FRANCE	
Stephane Guivarc'h (Auxerre)	20
Ardijan Kozniku (Bastia) *	16
David Trezeguet (Monaco)	15
Victor Ikpeba (Monaco)	13
Lilian Laslandes (Bordeaux)	13
Marco Simone (Paris SG)	12
GEORGIA	
Levan Khomeriki (Dynamo Tbilisi)	17
David Mudzhiri (Dynamo Tbilisi)	15
Paata Machutadze (Dynamo Batumi)	14
Levan Megreladze (Torpedo Kutaisi)	13
Georgi Kalandadze (Odishi Zugdidi)	13
GERMANY	
Ulf Kirsten (Bayer Leverkusen)	22
Olaf Mars (Kaiserslautern)	20
Stephane Chapuisat (Borussia Dortmund)	14
Roy Praeger (VfL Wolfsburg)	13
Fredi Bobic (VfB Stuttgart)	13
Carsten Jancker (Bayern Munich)	13
Joergen Pettersson (Borussia MG)	13
Toni Polster (Koln)	13
Michael Pretz (Hertha Berlin)	13
Bernhard Winkler (1860 Munich)	13
GREECE	
Krizstof Warzycha (Panathinaikos)	26
Ilya Ivic (Olympiakos Piraeus)	22
George Georgiadis (Panathinaikos)	20
Costas Frantzeskos (PAOK)	17
Demis Nikolaidis (AEK Athens)	16
HOLLAND	
Nikos Machlas (Vitesse Arnhem)	34
Shota Arveladze (Ajax)	24
Ronald Hamming (Fortuna Sittard)	20
Dejan Curovic (Vitesse)	17
Jari Litmanen (Ajax)	16
HUNGARY	
Zoltan Vaczi (Vasas Budapest)	16
Krisztian Tiber (Tiszakecske)	15
Ferenc Hamori (Vasas Budapest)	14
Miklos Feher (Gyori Eto)	13
Ferenc Orosz (MTK Budapest)	13
ICELAND	
Tryggvi Gudmundsson (IBC Vestmannaeyjar)	19
Andri Sigthorsson (KR Reykjavik)	15
Thorvaidur Sigurbjornsson (Leiftur Ofafsjordur)	8
Steingrimur Johannesson (IBV Vestmannaeyjar)	8
Sverrir Sverrisson (IBV Vestmannaeyjar)	7
Karis Steinn Reynisson (Akranes)	7
Einar Thor Danielsson (KR Reykjavik)	7
Rikhardur Dadason (KR Reykjavik)	7
IRELAND	
Steven Geoghegan (Shelbourne)	17
Tony Cousins (Shamrock Rovers)	14
Graham Lawlor (Bohemians)	13
Ian Gilzean (St Patricks Ath)	12
Jason Sherlock (University College Dublin)	12
Pat Scully (Shelbourne)	11

NAME	GOALS SCORED
ISRAEL	
Alon Mizrahi (Maccabi Haifa)	18
Ofer Shitrit (Hapoel Tel Aviv)	17
Stefan Saloi (Betar Jerusalem)	16
Eli Driks (Maccabi Tel Aviv)	14
Istvan Pishont (Betar Jerusalem)	14
Yossi Benayoun (Hapoel Beersheba)	14
ITALY	
Oliver Bierhoff (Udinese)	25
Ronaldo (Internazionale)	22
Alessandro Del Piero (Juventus)	21
Gabriel Batistuta (Fiorentina)	20
Vincenzo Montella (Sampdoria)	20
LATVIA	
David Chaladze (Skonto Riga)	20
Mikhail Miholap (Skonto Riga)	14
Arturs Zakreshevskis (Daugava Riga)	9
Sergei Solovyov (Skonto Riga)	9
Yuri Molotkov (Lokomotive Daugava)	8
LITHUANIA	
Vidas Danchenka (Kareda Siauliai)	23
Dainius Saulenas (Zhalgiris)	16
Remigijus Pocius (Kareda)	15
Audrius Banevichius (Ekranas)	12
Valdas Trakys (Kaunas)	10
Povilas Lukshys (Ekranas Paevezhys)	10
LUXEMBOURG	
Michael Zaritski (Sporting Mertzig)	20
Gordon Braun (Jeunesse Esch)	19
Franco Iovino (Wiltz)	18
Serge Thill (Grevenmacher)	15
Cosimo Barnabo (Petange)	13
MACEDONIA	
Gjorgi Atanasov (Belasica Strumica)	11
Fernando Jefferson (Pelister Bitola)	9
Ilco Borov (Pobeda Prilep)	8
Mirko Spasevski (Skopje)	8
Zoran Stojcevski (Sileks Kratovo)	7
Miroslav Djokic (Sileks Kratovo)	7
MALTA	
Joe Brincat (Birkirkara)	19
Michael Gales (Birkirkara)	14
Carmel Busuttil (Sliema)	13
Gilbert Agius (Valetta)	12
Daniel Theuma (Pieta Hotspurs)	12
MOLDOVA	
Sergei Rogachev (Sherif Tiraspol)	16
NORTHERN IRELAND	
Vinny Arkins (Portadown)	22
Justin McBride (Glentoran)	22
Tony Grant (Glenavon)	22
Barry Patton (Ballymena)	14
Barry O'Connor (Cliftonville)	14
Glenn Ferguson (Linfield)	14
Michael McHugh (Omagh)	14
NORWAY	
Sigurd Rushfeldt (Rosenborg Trondheim)	25
Mona Ivar Mielde (Brann Bergen)	16
Kjetil Lovvik (Brann Bergen)	15
Jostein Flo (Stromsgodset)	14
POLAND	
Radoslaw Jasinski (Zaglebie Lubin)	11
Marcin Kuzba (Gornik Zabrze)	11
Mariusz Srutwa (Ruch Chorzow)	11
Arkadiusz Bak (Polonia Warsaw)	11
Sylwester Czereszewski (Legia Warsaw)	11
Marek Saganowski (LKS Lodz)	11
PORTUGAL	
Mario Jardel (Porto)	19
Ayew Kwame (Boavista)	14
Nuno Gomes (Benfica)	13
Karoglan Mladen (Braga)	12
Isaias Soares (Campomaiorense)	12

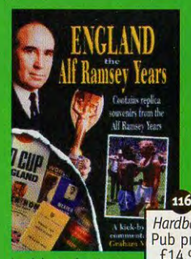
NAME	GOALS SCORED
ROMANIA	
Ioan Oana (Gloria Bistrita)	21
Constantin Barbu (Arges Pitesti)	21
Catalin Munteanu (Steaua Bucharest)	17
Vali Stefan (Otelul Galati)	14
Ionel Danciulescu (Steaua Bucharest)	14
RUSSIA	
Oleg Veretennikov (Rotor Volgograd)	22
Oleg Teryokhin (Dynamo Moscow)	17
Igor Yanovsky (Alania Vladikavkaz)	13
Alexander Zernov (Rotor Volgograd)	11
Lev Berezner (Chernomorets Novorossiisk)	11
SCOTLAND	
Marco Negri (Rangers)	32
Harald Brattbakk (Celtic)	31
Kjell Olafsson (Dundee Utd)	18
Andy Smith (Dunfermline)	16
Henrik Larsson (Celtic)	15
SLOVAKIA	
Lubomir Luhovy (Spartak Trnava)	17
Martin Fabus (OD Trencin)	14
Jozef Koziej (FC Kosice)	13
Szilard Nemth (FC Kosice)	11
Marek Ujlaky (Spartak Trnava)	9
SLOVENIA	
Faik Kamberovic (Protonavto Publikum)	15
Ismet Ekmecic (Olimpija)	14
Stefan Skaper (Mura)	14
Anton Zlogar (Primorje Ajdovscina)	13
Goran Giutalj (Mura)	12
SPAIN	
Christian Vieri (Atletico Madrid)	22
Luis Enrique Martinez (Barcelona)	18
Rivaldo (Barcelona)	18
Darko Kovacevic (Real Sociedad)	16
Fernando Correa (Racing Santander)	15
Luboslav Penev (Compostela)	15
SWEDEN	
Mats Lillenberg (Halmstad)	14
Christer Mattiasson (Elfsborg)	14
Dan Sahlin (Orebro)	14
Andreas Andersson (IFK Gothenburg)	13
Andreas Hermansson (Trelleborg)	13
SWITZERLAND	
Kubilay Turkyilmaz (Grasshopper)	21
Shabani Nonda (FC Zurich)	20
Nestor Subiat (Grasshopper)	17
David Sesa (Servette)	16
TURKEY	
Hakan Sukur (Galatasaray)	31
Hami Mandirali (Trabzonspor)	20
Serkan Aykut (Samsunspor)	18
Erdogan Yilmaz (Karabukspor)	15
Mehmet Ozdilek (Besiktas)	15
Magaid Musisi (Dardanelspor)	15
UKRAINE	
Olexander Haidash (Tavria Simferepol)	13
Avtandil Kapanadze (Nyva Ternopil)	13
Serhiy Rebrov (Dynamo Kiev)	12
Andriy Shevchenko (Dynamo Kiev)	11
Olexander Palyanitsa (Karpety Lviv)	10

Information supplied by Reuters

Football Book Club

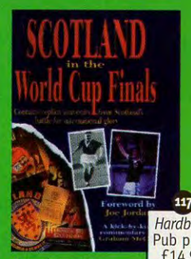
The best way to keep in touch with all the latest and best football books

FREE Postage & Packing! (In the UK)



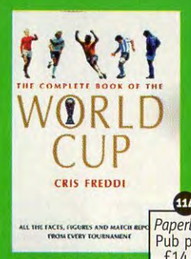
116 *Hardback* Pub price £14.99 **Club price £11.99**

Lavish production complete with eight replica souvenirs



117 *Hardback* Pub price £14.99 **Club price £11.99**

Same large-size format – but with ten replica items!

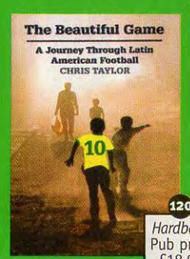


114 *Paperback* Pub price £14.99 **Club price £11.99**

352-page illustrated history packed with facts, figs and reports

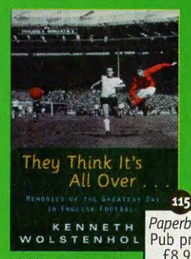
90 *Paperback* Pub price £12.99 **Club price £10.99**

Fitting tributes from family, friends and football greats



120 *Hardback* Pub price £18.99 **Club price £14.99**

Incisive celebration of football culture in Latin America

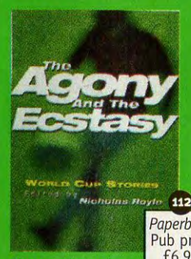


115 *Paperback* Pub price £8.99 **Club price £7.99**

Vivid memories of the greatest event in English football

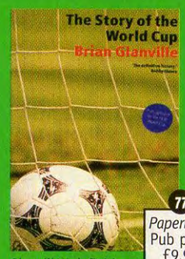
57 *Hardback* Pub price £16.99 **Club price £12.99**

Large 192-page England history with over 200 archive pics



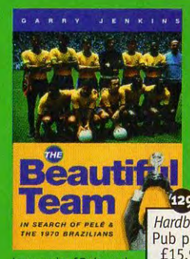
112 *Paperback* Pub price £6.99 **Club price £5.99**

Short stories and new writing with a World Cup theme



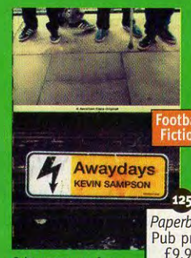
77 *Paperback* Pub price £9.99 **Club price £8.99**

Glanville's definitive history of the World Cup (updated)



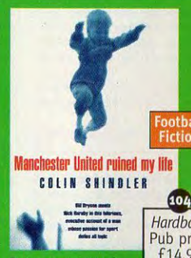
129 *Hardback* Pub price £15.99 **Club price £12.99**

In search of Pele and the 1970 Brazilians – a brilliant book



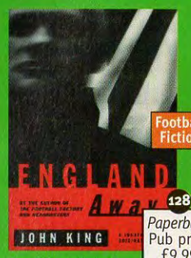
125 *Paperback* Pub price £9.99 **Club price £8.99**

Gritty account of sex and soccer in post-punk Merseyside



104 *Hardback* Pub price £14.99 **Club price £11.99**

Bryson meets Hornby in this entertaining rites-of-passage tale



128 *Paperback* Pub price £9.99 **Club price £7.99**

From the author of *The Football Factory* and *Headhunters*

150 Both Books Pub price £15.98 **Club price £12.98**

103 *Paperback* **Club price £7.99**

Volume II of Simon Kuper's series – on a World Cup theme

06 *Paperback* **Club price £7.99**

Volume 1 of acclaimed new football writing

100 Years of Football FIFA Museum Collection

101 *Paperback* Pub price £22.50 **Club price £15.95**

300-page large format collection of football memorabilia and collectables from the FIFA museum. Fully illustrated in colour throughout and featuring relics and curiosities, paintings, posters and prints, balls and boots, toys and games, ceramics and sculptures.

This is just a small selection of the hundreds of books available from the Football Book Club. Send for our colour catalogue or contact us if you're looking for a particular book

The Football Book Club

- **Superb Value** All books are offered at savings of up to 30% on the published price and postage and packing is FREE in the UK
- **A Free Catalogue** Three times a year, packed with a comprehensive selection of the best and latest football books
- **Convenience** Order using our FREEPOST service (no stamp required) or by telephone, fax or e-mail. Your books will be promptly delivered, direct to your door
- **Satisfaction Guarantee** If any book does not meet with your complete approval, return it within 5 days in the original packing for a full refund
- **Special Orders** If you're looking for a particular book call us on 0171 561 1606 – if it's available, we'll get it for you

FOUR EASY ORDER OPTIONS:

● Mail the form below ● Fax it to 0171 561 1607 ● Call 0171 561 1606 ● Order by e-mail to fbc@twoheads.demon.co.uk

1 Fill in this form, copy it, or write out the details on a separate piece of paper and send to: **The Football Book Club, FREEPOST LON 6708, LONDON, N19 3BR** *(no stamp required in the UK)*

2 ☐ YES, I'd like to join The Football Book Club, please send me the book(s) I have selected. As a member, I will receive a catalogue three times per year, can use the special order service and take advantage of discounted prices and FREE post and packing in the UK

3 Fill in the code number of your choice(s): ☐☐☐ ☐☐☐ ☐☐☐ ☐☐☐ ☐☐☐

4 I enclose my cheque/money order for £..... payable to The Football Book Club
OR Please debit my Visa/Mastercard Number –
☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐
Expiry date ☐☐ ☐☐ Signature.....

5 Name .....
Address .....
.....
..... Postcode.....

THE TEAM YOU SUPPORT .....

POSTAGE AND PACKING IS **FREE** IN THE UK. Airmail post & packing Europe £2.95 per book. Airmail rest of world, £4.50 paperback, £7.00 hardback. Surface mail £3.50 per book.

CREDIT CARD HOTLINE 0171 561 1606 MON-FRI 9AM-5PM

World Service

Your complete guide to the month's stats and facts

INTERNATIONAL RESULTS

INDEX

ANGOLA: Zambia (1-1, May 3), Bosnia (5-0, May 14)
ARGENTINA: Brazil (1-0, Apr 29)
BOSNIA: Argentina (5-0, May 14)
BRAZIL: Argentina (1-0, Apr 29)
CHILE: Lithuania (1-0, Apr 29)
ESTONIA: Mexico (6-0, May 9)
GEORGIA: Tunisia (1-1, May 2)
HUNGARY: Iran (2-0, Apr 20)
ICELAND: Saudi Arabia (1-1, May 13)
IRAN: Kuwait (1-1, Apr 14), Hungary (2-0, Apr 20)
ISRAEL: Latvia (5-1, May 17)
JAMAICA: Macedonia (2-1, Apr 20), Saudi Arabia (0-0, May 4), South Korea (2-1, May 16)
JAPAN: Paraguay (1-1, May 17)
KUWAIT: Iran (1-1, Apr 14)
LATVIA: Lithuania (2-1, Apr 21), Israel (5-1, May 17)
LEBANON: Yugoslavia (1-0, Apr 21)
LITHUANIA: Latvia (2-1, Apr 21), Chile (1-0, Apr 29)
MACEDONIA: Jamaica (2-1, Apr 20), United States (0-0, May 16)
MEXICO: Estonia (6-0, May 9)
NAMIBIA: Saudi Arabia (2-1, May 17)
PARAGUAY: (1-1, May 17)
SAUDI ARABIA: Jamaica (0-0, May 4), Trinidad (3-1, May 9), Iceland (1-1, May 13), Namibia (2-1, May 17)
SOUTH KOREA: Jamaica (2-1, May 16)
TRINIDAD & TOBAGO: Saudi Arabia (3-1, May 9)
TUNISIA: Georgia (1-1, May 2)
UNITED STATES: Macedonia (0-0, May 16)
YUGOSLAVIA: Lebanon (1-0, Apr 21)
ZAMBIA: Angola (1-1, May 3)

Tuesday, April 14

Apr 14 - Tabriz - intl friendly
Iran 1 (Mansourian)
Kuwait 1 (Jaamal)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 12,000

Monday, April 20

Apr 20 - Tehran - Tehran tmt
Macedonia 2 (Hristov 17, 45)
Jamaica 1 (Hall 69pen)
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 60,000. **Ref:** Hamirad (Irn)
Macedonia: Milosevski - Veselinovski (Vaveski 85), Lazarevski, Milosevic, Markovski, Memedi, Sainovski (Dzouzelov 16), Trenevski, Sakiri, Gosev (Grozdanov 46), Hristov (Traikovski 80).
Jamaica: W Barrett - Dixon (Griffiths 13), Brown, Goodison, (Messam 78), Sewell, Cargill, Dawes, A. Williams, Gardener, McDonald (Hall 46), Lowe (Gayle 46).

Apr 20 - Tehran - Tehran tmt
Iran 0
Hungary 2 (Korsos 16, Illes 58)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 60,000. **Ref:** Rafi (Syr)
Iran: Abedzadeh - Khakpour, Peyravani, Pashzadeh, Mohammadkhani, Estilli, (Hamedari 68), Dinmohammadi, Mansourian (Mahdavikia 48) Minavand, Azizi, Emammifar (Akbarpour 48).
Hungary: Hajdu - Cs Feher, V Sebok (Lakos 88), Hrufka, Matyus, Szilveszter, Halmai, Illes, J Sebok (Vaczi 70), F Horvath (Vincze 86), A Korsos.

Tuesday, April 21

Apr 21 - Liepaja - Baltic Cup
Latvia 1 (Siesartchouk 85)
Lithuania 2 (Stepanovs og 20, Stumbrys 70)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 2,500. **Ref:** Kaldma (Est)
Latvia: Piedels - Stepanovs, Zakreshevsky, Laizans (Isakov 67), A. Lobanyov, V. Lobanyov,Loukachevitch, Polyakov (Astafyev 57), Pakhar, Babitchev, Karachauskas (Siesartchouk 55).
Lithuania: Stauche - Joukas, Skerla (Grjounas 74), Miknevitchius, Gleveteskis, Chemberas (Grudzinskas 74), Kirilovas, Buitkus (Karvelis 57), Preikshaitis (I Stechko 80), Zvingilas, Skarbailius (Stumbris 64).

April 21 - Jounieh - friendly
Lebanon 0
Yugoslavia 1 (Vucomanovic 54)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 200. **Ref:** Ammar Ammar

Wednesday, April 29

Apr 29 - Rio de Janeiro - intl friendly
Brazil 0
Argentina 1 (Lopez 84)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 99,697. **Ref:** Sars (Fr)
Brazil: Taffarel - Cafu, Aldair, Junior Baiano (Cleber 64), Roberto Carlos, Ze Elias, Cesar Sampaio, Rai (Leonardo 67), Denilson (Edmundo 69), Ronaldo, Romario.
Argentina: Burgos - Vivas, Ayala, Sensini, Zanetti, Almeyda, Simeone, Veron, Ortega (Delgado 75), Lopez (Pineda 88), Batistuta.

Apr 29 - Santiago - intl friendly
Chile 1 (Nunez 90)
Lithuania 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 7,000. **Ref:** Bello (Uru)
Chile: Ramirez - Galdamez (Jorge Gomez 46), Ramirez, Margas, Aros, Acuna, Parraguez (Cornejo 46), Valencia (Carreno 70), Estay, Tapia (Nunez 46), Barrera (Moya 70).
Lithuania: Stauce - Gleveckas, Ziukas, Skerla, Buzkamovas, Miknevicius (Zutautas 52), Sinkas, Kirilovas (Morinas 72), Stumbrys (Stesko 63), Zvingilas (Karvelis 63), Jankauskas.

Saturday, May 2

May 2 - Sousse - intl friendly
Tunisia 1 (Imed Ben Younes 79)
Georgia 1 (Kinkladze 40)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 30,000. **Ref:** Barber (Eng)

Sunday, May 3

May 3 - Luanda - Cosafa Castle Cup
Angola 1 (Chichangala 60)
Zambia 1 (Masauso Tembo 49)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 15,000

Monday, May 4

May 4 - Cannes, Fr - intl friendly
Saudi Arabia 0
Jamaica 0
Att: 500. **Ref:** Harrel (Fr)
S Arabia: Mohamed El-Deaya - Mohamed Sheleyah (Ahmad Douki 74), Abdullah Sulaiman, Mohamed Al-Khelaiwi (Ahmad Jameel 61), Hussain Abdulghani, Khamis Owairan, Khalid Al-Temawi (Hamzah Saleh 55), Sami Al-Jaber (Obaid Al-Dossary 74), Khalid M'sad, Ibrahim Sowayed, Saeed Al-Owairan.
Jamaica: Lawrence - Malcom (Sewell 72), Dixon, Brown (Dawes 76), Goodison, Gardner, Cargill (Waugh 77), Simpson, Whitmore, Williams, Burton (Hall 46).

Saturday, May 9

May 9 - Montecatini, Italy - intl friendly
Estonia 0
Mexico 6 (Garcia Aspe 5pen, Hernandez 10, 50, 85, Ordiales 40, 58)
HT: 0-3. **Att:** 500. **Ref:** Bolognino (It)
Mexico: Campos (O Sanchez 26) - Pardo, Davino, J Sanchez, Luna (Terrazzas 55), Ordiales (Pelaez 39), Suarez (Bernal 75), Garcia Aspe (Villa 60), R Ramirez, Luis Hernandez, Blanco (Palencia 75).
Estonia: Thover (Tammus 46) - Lemsalu, Kirs, Saviauk (Nommik 55), Alonen (Meet 35), Terehhov (M Rooba 68), Kristal (Ustritski 83), Reim, Zelinski (Annmiste 77), Viikmae, Oper.

May 9 - Cannes, France - intl friendly
Trinidad and Tobago 1 (Mrasto Knight 19)
Saudi Arabia 3 Al-Jaber 16, Al Owairan 79)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 425
Trindidad and Tobago: C Ince (McCommie 84) - S Davis, M Andrews, Elcock, Rougier (Gordon 74), Jemmott (Saunders 78), Julien, Mason, L Andrews (Thomas 83).
Saudi Arabia: Al-Deaya - Mohamed Chlia (Ahamad Al-Doukhi 70), Abdullah Souleman Zebrmaoui, Mohamed Al-Khelaioui, Hussain Abdulghani Souleimani (Abdulaziz Al-Janoubi 82), Khamis Al-Oweiran, Saeed Al-Owairan, Fouad Amin Anouar (Hamzah Saleh 70), Khaled Messaed Al-Mouwalid, Ibrahim Sowayed, Sami Al-Jaber (Alial Fehaid 70).

Wednesday, May 13

May 13 - Cannes, France - intl friendly
Saudi Arabia 1 (Al-Jaber 47)
Iceland 1 (Kolvidsson 8)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 500
S Arabia: Mohammed Al-Deaya - Mohammed Sheleyah, Mohamed Al-Khelaiwi, Abdullah Sulaiman, Hussain Abdulghani - Ibrahim Sowayed, Fouad Anwar, Khamis Owairan (Hamzah Saleh 23), Khalid Mass'ad (Obaid Al-Dossary 64), Sami Al-Jaber (Yussef Al-Thunayan 73), Saeed Al-Owairan.
Iceland: Kristinsson - Thorvaldsson, Sigurdsson, Sigurdur Jonsson, Gunnarsson, Hreidarsson, Kolvidsson, Sverri Sverrisson, Danielsson (Gudmunsson 64), Dadasson (Adolfsson 85), Tordur Gudjonsson (Helgi Sigursson 64).

Thursday, May 14

May 14 - Cordoba - intl friendly
Argentina 5 (Batistuta 4, 23, 79, Zanetti 55, Ortega 60)
Bosnia 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 46,700. **Ref:** Luis Pena (Ch)
Argentina: Roa - Paz, Ayala, Sensini, Zanetti, Simeone, Almeyda, Veron, Ortega, Batistuta, Lopez.
Bosnia: Dedic - Tolja, Katana, Varesahovic, Ramcic, Kapetanovik, Salihamidacic, Kevric, Mujdza, Bolic, Demirovic.

Saturday, May 16

May 16 - Seoul - intl friendly
South Korea 2 (Lee Sang-yoon 35, 49)
Jamaica 1 (Powell 41)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 30,000
S Korea: Seo Dong-myung - Jang Dae-il, Kim Tae-young, Jang Hyung-seok, Lee Sang-yun, Choi Sung-yong, Kim Doh-keun, Yoo Sang-chul, Ko Jong-soo, Choi Yong-soo, Hwang Sun-hong.
Jamaica: Lawrence - Gardner, Goodison, Waugh, Dawes, Malcolm, Powell, Simpson, Whitmore, Hall, Williams.

May 16 - San Jose, Calif - intl friendly
United States 0
FYR Macedonia 0
Att: 15,000. **Ref:** Ronald Cedena
US: Keller - Pope, Dooley, Burns, Jones, Maisonneuve, Deering, Ramos (Preki 60), Moore, Agoos, McBride (Wegerle 63).
Macedonia: Milosevski - Veselinovski (Zaharievski 21), Stojkovski (Lazarevski 87), Micevski, Trenevski, Markovski, Nikolovski, Milosevic (Gjuzelov 63), Memedi, Hristov (Gosev 90), Sakiri (Sainovski 84).

Sunday, May 17

May 17 - Rija - intl friendly
Latvia 1 (Lobyanov 83)
Israel 5 (Nimni 17, Talasnikov 23, Grayev 31, Tubi 63, Mizrahi 79)
HT: 0-3. **Att:** 2,000

May 17 - Tokyo - Kirin Cup
Japan 1 (Naoki Soma 86)
Paraguay 1 (Celso Ayala 7)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 53,408

May 17 - Cannes, France - intl friendly
Saudi Arabia 2 (Sami Al-Jaber 41, Ibrahim Sowayed 77)
Namibia 1 (Nauseb 31)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 300
S Arabia: Mohammed Al-Deayea - Mohammed Sheleyah (Ahmed Doukhi 69), Mohammed Al-Khilaiwi, Abdullah Sulaiman, Hussain Abdulghani - Ibrahim Sowayed, Khalid Al-Temawi (Nawas Al-Temyat 60), Khamis Al-Owairan, Khalid Mass'ad (Hamzah Saleh 79) - Sami Al-Jaber, Saed Al-Owairan (Obeid Al-Dosari 60).
Namibia: Andganda - Nomene (Silvestre Goroseb 66), Stanley Goagoseb, Duseb (Uchumeb 80), Gariseb - Nauseb, Hummel (Uri-Khob 66), Mannetti, Khaiseb - Shiwte, Angula.

OTHER INTERNATIONALS

Apr 23 (Palermo): Italian Part-time Lge 1 Cameroon 3 (Ipoua 14, 40, 43).
May 6 (Maine Road, Manchester): Manchester City 0 Jamaica 0.
May 7 (Bologna): Bologna 1 (Marocchi 76) Mexico 0.
May 10 (Kingston): Jamaica 3 (Gardner 8, Hall 40, Goodison 67) Santos 2 (Lucio 23, Jorgihno 37).
May 13 (Santiago): Chile 3 (Barrera, Carreno, Castaneda) La Serena 2 (Castillo 2). - **(Venice):** Venezia 0 Mexico 1 (Luis Garcia 39).
May 16 (Santiago): Chile 3 (Barrera 54, 56, Neira 89) Palestino 0. **(Dublin: Paul McGrath Testimonial):** Rep Ireland 2 (Delap, Farrelly) Jack Charlton XI 3 (Cole, Yorke, Saunders).

EUROPE

ALBANIA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Vllaznia Shkoder	32	22	5	5	39	20	71
SK Tirana Tirana	32	18	8	6	53	18	62
Partizani Tirana	32	19	4	9	58	24	61
Teuta Durres	32	17	2	13	37	34	53
Apollonia Fier	32	14	7	11	37	30	49
Shkumbini Peqin	32	15	3	14	47	43	48
Elbasani	32	14	4	14	45	30	46
Laci	32	14	3	15	42	41	45
Lushnja	32	13	5	14	53	27	44
Tomorri Berat	32	14	2	16	34	43	44
Bylis Ballsh	32	12	6	14	38	35	42
Skenderbeu Korce	32	12	6	14	36	47	42
Dinamo Tirana	32	11	8	13	34	34	41
Besa Kavaje	32	12	5	15	42	44	41
Flamurtari Vlore	32	11	7	14	35	39	40
Shqiponja	32	11	4	17	32	53	37
Sopoti Librazhd	32	10	5	17	34	57	35
Albpetrol Patos	32	5	4	23	22	89	19

AUSTRIA

Saturday, April 25

Grazer AK 3 (Radovic 32, Lipa 82, Ehmann 90)
SV Ried 0 Att: 6,000

Linz ASK 0
Salzburg 2 (Ivanauskas 2, Aufhauser 20) Att: 11,000

Rapid Wien 2 (M. Wagner 38, Wetl 61)
Admira Wacker 0 Att: 8,000

FC Tirol 2 (Severeyns 73, Streiter 88)
Austria Wien 0 Att: 3,000

Sunday, April 26

Lustenau 0 Att:11,500
Sturm Graz 3 (Popovic 8, Vastic 11, Neukirchner 17)

Wednesday, April 29

Admira Wacker 1 (Binder 51)
Grazer AK 4 (Sabitzer 2, Lipa 34, Kulovits 78, 90)
Att: 3,000

Austria Wien 1 (Schiesswald 77)
Linz ASK 4 (Frigard 43, 60, Pawlowski 53, Dadi 89)
Att: 3,000

Salzburg 1 (Ivanauskas 35)
Rapid Wien 0 Att: 12,000

Sturm Graz 2 (Vastic 35, Reinmayr 84)
FC Tirol 2 (Mahmoud 40, Baur 64) Att: 13,000

SV Ried 1 (Steininger 48)
Lustenau 1 (Zeller og 4) Att: 4,000

Saturday, May 2

Admira Wacker 1 (Slivovski 80)
SV Reid 1 (Rothbauer 63) Att: 500

Grazer AK 0
Salzburg 2 (Aufhauser 75, Glieder 89) Att: 8,000

Linz ASK 4 (Frigard 34, 61, 65, Stoger 83)
Sturm Graz 0 Att: 10,000

Rapid Wien 0
Austria Wien 0 Att: 10,000

FC Tirol 1 (Jezek 45)
Lustenau 1 (Koejoe 52) Att: 5,000

Saturday, May 9

Sturm Graz 0
Rapid Wien 1 (Milanic og 35) Att: 15,000

Lustenau 4 (Tiefenbch 13, 30, Kleer 27, Lorenz 78)
Linz ASK 1 (Dadi 82) Att: 10,000

Austria Wien 0
Grazer AK 1 (Lipa 42) Att: 3,000

Salzburg 4 (Aufhauser 24, Jurcevic 36, Amerhauser 84, Kitzbichle 85)
Admira Wacker 0 Att: 6,000

SV Ried 1 (Drechsel pen 79)
FC Tirol 3 (Mahmoud 35, Wazinger 54, Jezek 64)
Att: 3,000

AUSTRIA - FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Sturm Graz	34	23	8	3	78	28	77
Grazer AK	34	17	6	11	50	31	57
Rapid	34	16	8	10	36	35	56
Linz ASK	34	16	4	14	63	51	52
Salzburg	34	14	8	12	45	32	50
Innsbruck	34	12	12	10	48	46	48
Austria Wien	34	10	9	15	37	51	39
Ried	34	9	9	16	36	53	36
Lustenau	34	6	14	14	35	52	32
Admira/Wacker	34	5	6	23	33	82	21

AUSTRIAN CUP - SEMI-FINALS

May 5: Sturm Graz 2 Linz ASK 0;
Admira Wacker 0 SV Ried 1 *(aet)*

BELGIUM

Saturday, April 25

Charleroi 0
Beveren 0 Att: 4,500

Mouscron 2 (El Idrissi 18, Martic 81)
Antwerp 0 Att: 7,500

Gent 2 (Barka 59, Van Handenhoven 85)
Lommel 0 Att: 6,000

Ekeren 1 (Radzinski 9)
Westerlo 0 Att: 3,500

Lokeren 1 (Koller 33)
Harelbeke 0 Att: 5,000

Standard 4 (L. Mpenza 4, M Mpenza 21, 25, Haeldermans 30)
RWDM 0 Att: 12,000

Sunday, April 26

Anderlecht 0
Club Brugge 1 (Vermant 67) Att: 28,161

Eendracht Aalst 3 (Meyssen 28, pen 61, De Vleeschauwer 56)
St Truiden 2 (Ljubobratovic 24, Rudonja 70)
Att: 4,000

Genk 1 (Peeters 38)
Lierse 3 (Zdebel 32, Haagdoren 57, Serneels pen 87)
Att: 9,000

Tuesday, April 28

Harelbeke 3 (Origi 18, Visser 35, 90)
Ekeren 1 (Hofmans 74) Att: 4,000

Wednesday, April 29

Antwerp 2 (Da Silva 3, Muller 58)
Charleroi 4 (Jovan 22, 52, Djim 32, Brogno 72)
Att: 1,500

Beveren 3 (Van den Eede 6, Torken 76, 89)
Lokeren 0 Att: 8,000

Club Brugge 4 (Addo 2, Verheyen 23, De Brul 39, Anic 64)
Eendracht Aalst 1 (Meyssen pen 44) Att: 13,000

Genk 2 (Conon 67, Strupar 83)
Gent 1 (Dragutinovic 12) Att: 7,240

Lierse 3 (Huistra 9, Leen 49, Haagdoren 58)
Standard 1 (Wamberto 56) Att: 6,500

RWDM 2 (Everson 54, Sonck 74)
Mouscron 1 (Ban 23) Att: 4,500

St Truiden 0
Lommel 0 Att: 4,500

Westerlo 2 (Thans 5, Burg pen 89)
Anderlecht 2 (Arst 48, 82) Att: 10,000

Sunday, May 3

Anderlecht 1 (Pastoor og 66)
Harelbeke 0 Att: 25,890

Charleroi 1 (Jovan 26)
RWDM 1 (Sonck 56) Att: 3,000

Eendracht Aalst 2 (Meyssen pen 52, Mukanya 79)
Westerlo 3 (Ferreira 2, 85, Janssen 21) Att: 4,000

Mouscron 2 (Nzuzi 38, Seynhaeve 65)
Lierse 0 Att: 6,000

Ekeren 1 (Radzinski 19)
Beveren 1 (Torken pen 76) Att: 4,000

Lokeren 5 Antwerp 0

Lommel 1 (Waligora 41)
Club Brugge 1 (Verheyen 18) Att: 5,500

St Truiden 3 (Dragutinovic og 6, Rudonja 51, Dierickx 62)
Gent 3 (Foguenne 76, Nielsen 78, 83) Att: 3,000

Standard 3 (Debusschere 9, M. Mpenza 36, Haeldermans 86)
Genk 0 Att: 8,000

Sunday, May 10

Antwerp 3 (Owolabi 42, 67, Van Ankeren 59)
Germinal Ekeren 2 (Schaessens pen 54, Da Silva 60)
Att: 2,000

Beveren 0
Anderlecht 1 (Taument 90) Att: 9,000

Club Brugge 6 (Ilic 3, Anic 20, 46, Jankauskas 33, Vermant 85, Claessens 90)
St Truiden 0 Att: 14,500

Gent 4 (Dragutinovic 26, Barka 32, Nielsen 66, Caers 76)
Standard 1 (E. Mpenza 3) Att: 5,000

Genk 0
Mouscron 2 (Vandooren 29, Isaias 71) Att: 8,000

Harelbeke 2 (Visser 31, Wostijn 63)
Eendracht Aalst 1 (Lassen 26) Att: 4,000

Lierse 1 (Brocken 24)
Charleroi 1 (Djim 35) Att: 5,000

RWDM 5 (Sabbadini pen 16, Vandersmissen 26, Sonck 28, 58 68)
Lokeren 1 (Lisasi 47) Att: 3,000

Westerlo 1 (Janssen 4)
Lommel 1 (Cannaerts 1) Att: 4,500

BELGIUM - FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Club Brugge	34	26	6	2	78	29	84
Genk	34	20	6	8	65	40	66
Germinal	34	17	7	10	60	48	58
Anderlecht	34	16	9	9	53	37	57
Harelbeke	34	15	10	9	50	31	55
Lokeren	34	16	4	14	68	68	52
Lierse	34	14	8	12	54	45	50
Gent	34	11	14	9	50	44	47
Standard	34	11	10	13	53	50	43
Westerlo	34	9	14	11	52	56	41
Lommel	34	10	11	13	46	50	41
Mouscron	34	11	8	15	39	45	41
Charleroi	34	9	12	13	46	57	39
St Truiden	34	8	13	13	32	45	37
Aalst	34	9	9	16	51	66	36
Beveren	34	7	11	16	30	48	32
Molenbeek	34	8	7	19	39	74	31
Antwerp	34	6	7	21	38	71	25

BELGIAN CUP - FINAL

Genk 4 (Oulare 21, 22, Gudjonsson 37, Peeters 57)
Club Brugge 0 Att: 35,000

BULGARIA

Apr 25: Botev 5 Etar 1; Dobrudzha 1 Slavia 0; Levski Kjetil 2 Lok Plovdiv 0; Levski Sofia 2 Spartak V 1; Lok Sofia 0 Litex 3; Minjor 2 Spartak Pleven 0; Neftochimik 1 Metalurg 0; Olympic 0 CSKA 0.
Apr 29: CSKA 4 Dobrudzha 1; Etar 0 Minjor 1; Litex 3 Olympic 0; Lok Plovdiv 1 Levski Sofia 1; Metalurg 3 Levski Kjetil 1; Slavia 5 Botev 3; Spartak Pleven 1 Neftochimik 3; Spartak V 1 Lok Sofia 1.
May 2: Botev 3 CSKA 1; Dobrudzha 1 Litex 1; Etar 0 Spartak Pl 2; Levski Kjetil 2 Neftochimik 1; Levski Sofia 7 Metalurg 0; Lok Sofia 2 Lok Plovdiv 3; Minjor 1 Slavia 0; Olympic 2 Spartak Varna 0.
May 9: CSKA 5 Minjor 0; Litex 3 Botev 0; Lok Plovdiv 1 Olympic 0; Metalurg 2 Lok Sofia 1; Neftochimik 3 Levski Sofia 0; Slavia 4 Etar 0; Spartak Pleven 0 Levski Kjetil 1; Spartak Varna 3 Dobrudzha 1.

BULGARIA - FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Litex	30	21	6	3	73	25	69
Levski Sofia	30	19	7	4	74	27	64
CSKA	30	18	7	5	70	29	61
Neftochimik	30	17	4	9	62	31	55
Slavia	30	15	9	6	51	30	54
Levski Kjetil	30	15	1	14	43	39	46
Spartak Varna	30	12	6	12	42	36	42
Minjor	30	12	5	13	31	35	41
Lok Sofia	30	11	6	13	42	40	39
Metalurg	30	11	4	15	28	36	37
Botev	30	11	3	16	35	48	36
Dobrudzha	30	11	3	16	33	55	36
Lok Plovdiv	30	11	3	16	31	58	36
Olympic	30	11	2	17	26	50	35
Spartak Pleven	30	7	0	23	31	74	21
Etar	30	4	2	24	21	80	14

CYPRUS

Apr 11: AEK 1 Eth.Assha 2; Anaghenisis 0 AEL 1; Apollon 2 Enosis 1; Eth.Achna 1 Anorthosis 3; Evaghoras 4 APOEL 2; Omonia 8 APOP 1; Salamina 0 Alki 1.
Apr 25: AEL 1 Salamina 3; APOEL 3 Anaghenisis 6; APOP 3 Evaghoras 0; Alki 7 Eth.Assha 2; Anorthosis 4 Apollon 2; Enosis 1 Omonia 3; Eth.Achna 1 AEK 1.
May 2: AEK 1 Alki 4; Anaghenisis 1 APOP 1; Apollon 1 Eth.Achna 2; Eth.Assha 2 AEL 5; Evaghoras 1 Enosis 0; Omonia 2 Anorthosis 2; Salamina 6 APOEL 1.
May 9: AEK 1 Apollon 1; AEL 1 Alki 4; APOEL 1 Eth.Assha 3; APOP 1 Salamina 2; Anorthosis 6 Evaghoras 0; Enosis 2 Anaghenisis 3; Eth.Achna 0 Omonia 0.

CYPRUS - FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Anorthosis	26	21	3	2	87	18	66
Omonia	26	19	5	2	90	20	62
Apollon	26	16	7	3	50	25	55
Eth.Achna	26	13	8	5	35	28	47
AEK	26	9	7	10	42	40	34
Enosis	26	10	3	13	45	49	33
APOEL	26	8	7	11	48	51	31
Salamina	26	10	1	15	43	59	31
AEL	26	7	8	11	37	50	29
Alki	26	9	2	15	46	65	29
Evaghoras	26	8	5	13	29	52	29
Anaghenisis	26	7	6	13	37	65	27
APOP	26	7	5	14	40	59	26
Eth.Assha	26	3	3	20	28	76	12

CZECH REP

Apr 26: Bohdanec 2 Dukla 3; Budejovice 1 Liberec 1; Zizkov 0 Slavia 1; Plzen 3 Ostrava 1; Teplice 2 Drnovice 0; Olomouc 1 Opava 0; Sparta 2 Brno 0; Jablonec 3 Kralove 0.
May 3: Dukla 1 Jablonec 3; Kralove 0 Sparta 2; Brno 1 Olomouc 1; Opava 0 Teplice 1; Drnovice 2 Plzen 0; Ostrava 6 Zizkov 1; Slavia 1 Budejovice 0; Liberec 2 Bohdanec 0.
May 10: Liberec 2 Dukla 1; Bohdanec 1 Slavia 1; Budejovice 0 Ostrava 1; Zizkov 0 Drnovice 0; Plzen 3 Opava 2; Teplice 3 Brno 2; Olomouc 2 Kralove 2; Sparta 2 Jablonec 1.

CZECH REP - FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Sparta	27	21	4	2	48	15	67
Slavia	27	15	7	5	39	21	52
Ostrava	27	12	10	5	43	30	46
Olomouc	27	13	7	7	33	21	46
Liberec	27	12	8	7	36	29	44
Jablonec	27	11	9	7	43	30	42
Teplice	27	10	8	9	32	24	38
Zizkov	27	10	6	11	24	29	36
Brno	27	9	7	11	37	37	34
Plzen	27	9	5	13	36	40	32
Dukla	27	9	5	13	35	44	32
Drnovice	27	8	7	12	30	42	31
Opava	27	7	8	12	30	37	29
Kralove	27	7	8	12	22	35	29
Budejovice	27	7	6	14	24	40	27
Bohdanec	27	2	3	22	16	54	9

DENMARK

Apr 23: AaB 0 Kobenhavn 1.
Apr 24: AB 3 Brondby 1.
Apr 26: AGF 2 Silkeborg 2; Ikast 1 Fremad 2; Lyngby 2 AaB 1; OB 1 Kobenhavn 2; Vejle 4 Herfolge 2.
Apr 29: AB 4 AGF 4; Fremad 1 Herfolge 1.
May 3: AaB 1 Ikast 1; Brondby 5 Vejle 0; Kobenhavn 2 AGF 1; Fremad 1 AB 0; Herfolge 1 OB 0; Silkeborg 3 Lyngby 0.
May 10: AB 4 AaB 2; AGF 2 Herfolge 0; Brondby 7 Fremad 1; Ikast 2 Silkeborg 1; Lyngby 2 Kobenhavn 1; Vejle 3 OB 0.

DENMARK - FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Brondby	28	21	2	5	75	32	65
Kobenhavn	28	16	7	5	55	35	55
Silkeborg	28	14	10	4	49	29	52
Vejle	28	14	4	10	48	44	46
AB	28	11	8	9	53	44	41
Lyngby	28	11	6	11	44	53	39
AGF	28	9	10	9	47	44	37
AaB	28	10	6	12	48	46	36
Herfolge	28	8	6	14	39	59	30
Fremad	28	7	5	16	41	63	26
Ikast	28	5	5	18	39	71	20
OB	28	4	7	17	31	49	19

ENGLAND

Saturday, April 25

Aston Villa 1 (I. Taylor 57)
Bolton 3 (Cox 18, B. Taylor 41, Blake 84) Att: 38,392

Barnsley 0
Arsenal 2 (Bergkamp 23, Overmars 76) Att: 18,691

Blackburn 0
Wimbledon 0 Att: 24,848

Chelsea 4 (M. Hughes 11, 78, Clarke 67, Flo 72)
Liverpool 1 (Riedle 45) Att: 34,639

Derby 0
Leicester 4 (Heskey 1, 8, Izzet 2, Marshall 15)
Att: 29,855

Everton 1 (Ferguson 72)
Sheffield Wed 3 (Pembridge 6, 41, Di Canio 90)
Att: 35,497

Leeds 3 (Hasselbaink 16, 28, Kewell 75)
Coventry 3 (Huckerby 20, 34, 62) Att: 36,522

Tottenham 2 (Klinsmann 31, Ferdinand 73)
Newcastle 0 Att: 35,847

West Ham 2 (Sinclair 42, Lomas 82)
Southampton 4 (Le Tissier 40, Ostenstad 63, 86, Palmer 80) Att: 25,878

Monday, April 27

Crystal Palace 0
Man Utd 3 (Scholes 6, Butt 21, Cole 84) Att: 26,180

Wednesday, April 29

Arsenal 1 (Petit 34)
Derby 0 Att: 38,121

Coventry 0
Wimbledon 0 Att: 17,968

Leicester 0
Newcastle 0 Att:21,699

Chelsea 0
Blackburn 1 (Gallacher 48) Att: 33,311

Saturday, May 2

Bolton 5 (Blake 7, Fish 20, Phillips 30, Thompson 70, Holdsworth 79)
Crystal Palace 2 (Gordon 8, Bent 16) Att: 24,449

Coventry 2 (Dublin pen 19, Boateng 34)
Blackburn 0 Att: 18,794

Leicester 1 (Zagorakis 57)
Barnsley 0 Att: 21,293

Liverpool 5 (Owen 4, McAteer 21, 25, Leonhardsen 45, Ince 61)
West Ham 0 Att: 44,414

Newcastle 3 (Dabizas 39, Lee 42, Speed 59)
Chelsea 1 (Di Matteo 77) Att: 36,710

Sheffield Wed 1 (Sanetti 89)
Aston Villa 3 (Yorke 21, Hendrie 25, Joachim 50)
Att: 34,177

Southampton 0
Derby 2 (Dailly 50, Sturridge 88) Att: 15,202

Wimbledon 2 (Fear 21, 30)
Tottenham 6 (Ferdinand 18, Klinsmann 41, 54, 58, 60, Saib 79) Att: 25,820

Sunday, May 3

Arsenal 4 (Bilic og 6, Overmars 29, 57, Adams 89)
Everton 0 Att: 38,269

Monday, May 4

Man Utd 3 (Giggs 6, Irwin pen 29, Beckham 59)
Leeds 0 Att: 55,167

Tuesday, May 5

Crystal Palace 3 (Bent 44, Rodger 48, Lombardo 63)
West Ham 3 (Curcic og 4, Omoyinmi 68, 89)
Att: 19,129

Wednesday, May 6

Liverpool 4 (Ince 27, 30, Owen 41, Leonhardsen 87)
Arsenal 0 Att: 44,417

Sunday, May 10

Aston Villa 1 (Yorke pen 37)
Arsenal 0 Att: 39,372

Barnsley 0
Man Utd 2 (Cole 5, Sheringham 67) Att: 18,694

Blackburn 1 (Sutton 88)
Newcastle 0 Att: 29,300

Chelsea 2 (Vialli 73, Morris 90)
Bolton 0 Att: 34,845

Crystal Palace 1 (Morrison 90)
Sheffield Wed 0 Att: 16,876

Derby 1 (Wanchope 63)
Liverpool 0 Att: 30,492

Everton 1 (Farrelly 7)
Coventry 1 (Dublin 89) Att: 40,109

Leeds 1 (Haaland 81)
Wimbledon 1 (Ekoku 88) Att: 38,172

Tottenham 1 (Klinsmann 27)
Southampton 1 (Le Tissier 21) Att: 35,995

West Ham 4 (Lampard 15, Abou 31, 74, Sinclair 65)
Leicester 3 (Cottee 59, 83, Heskey 66) Att: 25,781

ENGLAND - FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Arsenal	38	23	9	6	68	33	78
Manchester Utd	38	23	8	7	73	26	77
Liverpool	38	18	11	9	68	42	65
Chelsea	38	20	3	15	71	43	63
Leeds	38	17	8	13	57	46	59
Blackburn	38	16	10	12	57	52	58
Aston Villa	38	17	6	15	49	48	57
West Ham	38	16	8	14	56	57	56
Derby	38	16	7	15	52	49	55
Leicester	38	13	14	11	51	41	53
Coventry	38	12	16	10	46	44	52
Southampton	38	14	6	18	50	55	48
Newcastle	38	11	11	16	35	44	44
Tottenham	38	11	11	16	44	56	44
Wimbledon	38	10	14	14	34	46	44
Sheffield Wed	38	12	8	18	52	67	44
Everton	38	9	13	16	41	56	40
Bolton	38	9	13	16	41	61	40
Barnsley	38	10	5	23	37	82	35
Crystal Palace	38	8	9	21	37	71	33

FA CUP – FINAL

Arsenal 2 (Overmars 24, Anelka 69)
Newcastle Utd 0 Att: 79,183

FRANCE

Saturday, April 25

Bordeaux 1 (Micoud 11)
Chateauroux 0 Att: 22,000

Guingamp 1 (Moreira 42)
Le Havre 2 (Huysman 33, Pouget 88) Att: 19,000

Lens 5 (Vairelles 14, 59, 89, Smicer 57, Drobnjak pen 70)
Bastia 1 (Perez 49) Att: 42,000

Montpellier 1 (Robert 3)
Auxerre 1 (Marlet 42) Att: 20,000

Nantes 1 (N'Diaye 45)
Rennes 1 (Bigne 48) Att: 25,000

Lyons 2 (Bravo 78, 80)
Cannes 0 Att: 25,000

Marseille 0
Strasbourg 0 Att: 40,000

Paris SG 1 (Ducrocq 24)
Monaco 2 (Ikpeba 27, Trezeguet 90) Att: 40,000

Toulouse 0
Metz 1 (Meyrieu 57) Att: 25,000

Saturday, May 9

Auxerre 1 (Lamouchi 13)
Lens 1 (Lachor 53) Att: 15,000

Bastia 2 (Kozniku 38, Laurent 43)
Nantes 1 (Le Roux 41) Att: 5,000

Cannes 1 (Bray 7)
Guingamp 3 (Tasfaout 47, Moreira 56, 85) Att: 2,000

Chateauroux 2 (Tebily 26, Cakar 58)
Paris SG 1 (Simone 35) Att: 16,000

Le Havre 1 (Pouget pen 33)
Marseille 1 (Moses 10) Att: 16,000

Metz 1 (Rodriguez 4)
Lyon 0 Att: 20,000

Monaco 5 (Trezeguet 15, 33, Ikpeba 26, 36, Giuly 89)
Bordeaux 2 (Wiltord 3, Laslandes 56) Att: 6,000

Rennes 1 (Diawara 73)
Toulouse 0 Att: 15,000

Strasbourg 3 (Arpinon 29, Seo 75, Kinet 85)
Montpellier 0 Att: 18,000

FRANCE - FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Lens	34	21	5	8	55	30	68
Metz	34	20	8	6	48	28	68
Monaco	34	18	5	11	51	33	59
Marseille	34	16	9	9	47	27	57
Bordeaux	34	15	11	8	49	41	56
Lyon	34	16	5	13	39	37	53
Auxerre	34	14	9	11	55	45	51
PSG	34	14	8	12	43	35	50
Bastia	34	13	11	10	36	31	50
Le Havre	34	10	14	10	38	35	44
Nantes	34	11	8	15	35	41	41
Montpellier	34	10	11	13	32	42	41
Strasbourg	34	9	10	15	39	43	37
Rennes	34	9	9	16	36	48	36
Toulouse	34	9	9	16	26	46	36
Guingamp	34	9	8	17	30	42	35
Chateauroux	34	8	7	19	31	59	31
Cannes	34	7	7	20	32	59	28

FRENCH CUP - FINAL

May 2: Paris SG 2 Lens 1

GERMANY

Friday, April 24

Hertha 1 (Sverrisson 80)
Arminia Bielefeld 1 (Kuntz 18) Att: 46,762

Kaiserslautern 3 (Marschall 45, 60, 90)
Borussia MG 2 (Hauseweiler 16, Pettersson 43)
Att: 38,000

Saturday, April 25

Bochum 3 (Michalke 9, 58, 87)
Karlsruhe 3 (Keller 16, Hassler 43, Gilewicz 74)
Att: 25,110

Hamburg 1 (Salihamidzic 27)
Duisburg 0 Att: 32,038

Hansa Rostock 1 (Dowe 25)
Stuttgart 1 (Poschner 74) Att: 24,500

Koln 2 (Schuster 51, Polster pen 57)
1860 Munich 3 (Cerny 13, Winkler 32, Heldt 34)
Att: 32,000

Schalke 0
Werder Bremen 1 (Bode 18) Att: 43,733

Wolfsburg 1 (Reyna 42)
Borussia Dortmund 4 (Chapuisat 15, 78, But 45, Moller 49) Att: 21,600

Sunday, April 26

Bayern Munich 2 (Tarnat 16, Rizzitelli 49)
Bayer Leverkusen 1 (Rink 83) Att: 54,000

Wednesday, April 29

Armenia Bielefeld 2 (Daei 35, 64)
Kaiserslautern 2 (Marschall 24, Rische 87)
Att: 22,512

Bayer Leverkusen 2 (Rink 62, Kirsten 80)
Borussia Dortmund 2 (Chapuisat 20, 78)
Att: 22,500

Bochum 2 (Joeran 10, 57)
Hertha 1 (Thom 71) Att: 25,000

Schalke 1 (Latal 90)
Koln 0 Att: 55,255

Saturday, May 2

Arminia Bielefeld 2 (Fuchs 55, 74)
Koln 1 (Munteanu 8) Att: 22,512

Bayer Leverkusen 0
Hertha 1 (Rekdal pen 65) Att: 22,500

Borussia Dortmund 0
Hamburg 1 (Salihamidzic 1) Att: 55,000

Borussia MG 5 (Lupescu pen 39, Wynhoff 43, Pflipsen 73, Voronin 86, Pettersson 90)
Hansa Rostock 2 (Neuville 25, Rehmer 57)
Att: 34,500

Duisburg 0
Bayern Munich 0 Att: 33,000

Karlsruhe 4 (Hengen 8, Regis 48, Hassler 75, Metz 90)
Stuttgart 2 (Akpoborie 46, Ristic 89) Att: 33,700

Kaiserslautern 4 (Marschall 24, 55, Wagner 52, Rische 88)
Wolfsburg 0 Att: 38,000

1860 Munich 1 (Gorges 9)
Schalke 0 Att: 45,700

Werder Bremen 1 (Maximov 81)
Bochum 0 Att: 35,800

Saturday, May 9

Bayern Munich 4 (Scholl 47, Matthaus 48, Elber 82, 90)
Borussia Dortmund 0 Att: 63,000

Bochum 1 (Schreiber 38)
Munich 1860 0 Att: 30,000

Hamburg 1 (Dembinski 50)
Kaiserslautern 1 (Marschall pen 86) Att: 58,000

Hansa Rostock 4 (Neuville 31, Studer 45, Baumgart 66, Majak 73)
Karlsruhe 2 (Hassler 30, 90) Att: 24,500

Hertha 1 (Preetz 68)
Duisburg 3 (Wohlert 38, Osthoff 61, Spies 75)
Att: 49,637

Koln 2 (Munteanu 24, Scherr 61)
Bayer Leverkusen 2 (Feldhoff 83, Lottner 89)
Att: 40,000

Schalke 2 (Van Hoogdalem pen 44, pen 78)
Arminia Bielefeld 1 (Gerber 14) Att: 62,000

Stuttgart 1 (Djordjevic 74)
Werder Bremen 0 Att: 53,000

Wolfsburg 0
Borussia MG 2 (Effenberg 13, Wynhoff 35)
Att: 21,600

GERMANY - FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Kaiserslautern	34	19	10	5	62	39	67
Bayern Munich	34	19	9	6	69	37	66
Leverkusen	34	14	13	7	66	39	55
Stuttgart	34	14	10	10	55	49	52
Schalke	34	13	13	8	38	32	52
Hansa Rostock	34	14	9	11	54	46	51
Werder Bremen	34	14	8	12	43	47	50
Hamburger SV	34	12	10	12	38	45	46
Duisburg	34	11	11	12	43	44	44
Dortmund	34	11	10	13	57	55	43
Hertha	34	12	7	15	41	53	43
Bochum	34	11	8	15	41	49	41
1860 Munich	34	11	8	15	43	54	41
Wolfsburg	34	11	6	17	38	54	39
Borussia MG	34	9	11	14	54	59	38
Karlsruhe	34	9	11	14	48	60	38
Koln	34	10	6	18	49	64	36
Bielefeld	34	8	8	18	43	56	32

GERMAN CUP - FINAL

Bayern Munich 2 (Babbel 70, Basler 89)
MSV Duisburg 1(Salou 20). Att: 75,841

Ladbroke
(Gibraltar) Ltd

an easy and comprehensive betting service from the world's largest bookmaker on the world's greatest sport

"Bet Tax Free on Football with the World's best-known bookmaker"

Ladbroke (Gibraltar) Ltd, offer a highly personalised service which we believe cannot be matched by any legal operator.

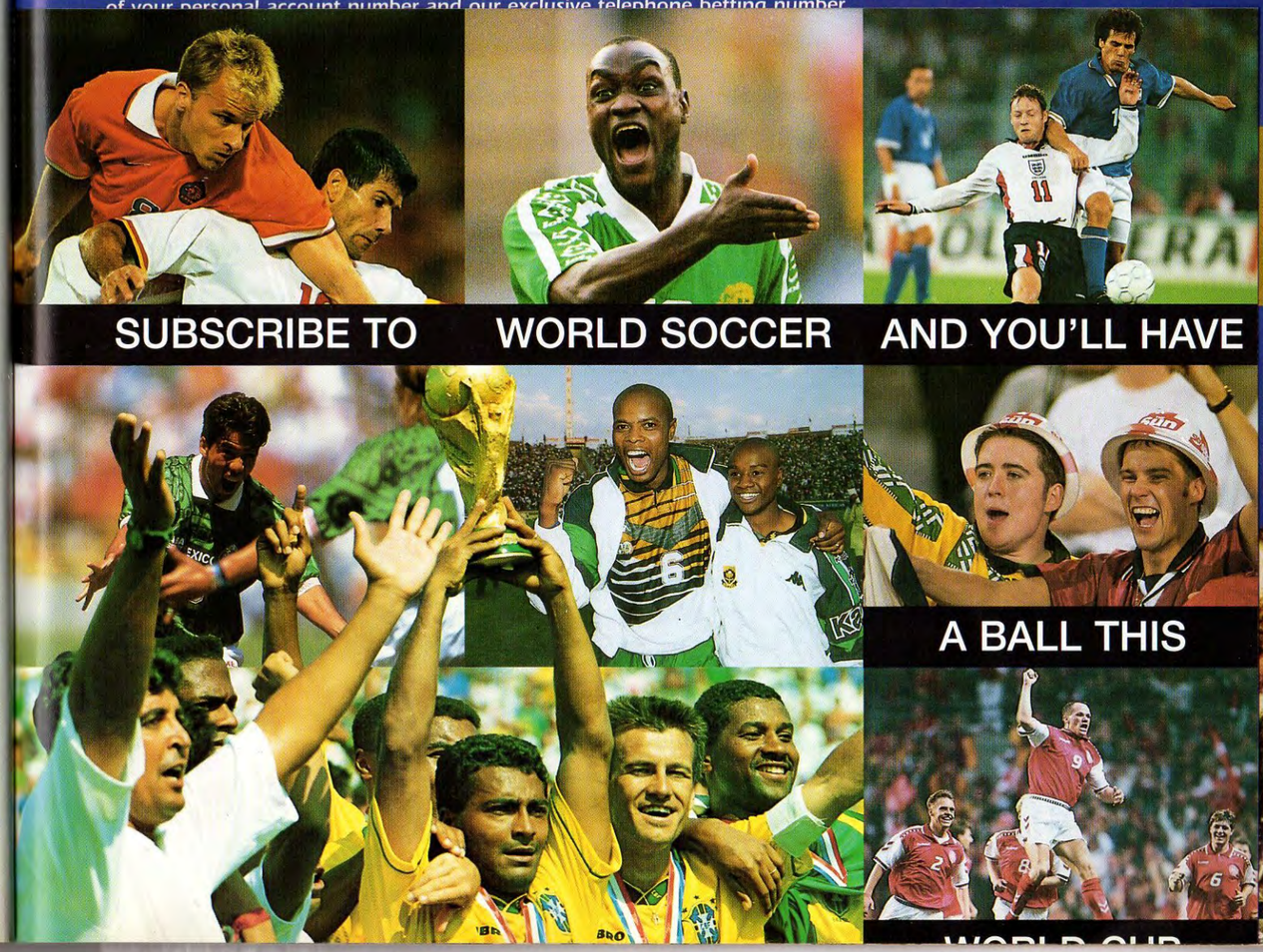
Now you can bet on football with the security of the world's biggest bookmaker and no deductions for government taxes or levies.

an easy way to bet - contact us now to arrange your account

Simply call the number below to find how you can avail yourself of this unique international advantage-from the winning team of Ladbroke (Gibraltar) Ltd.

Tel: (350) 45375 Fax: (350) 45396

When your opening deposit (minimum £2,000) has been received by our bank we will notify you by phone of your personal account number and our exclusive telephone betting number.



World Service

Chelsea 4 (M. Hughes 11, 78, Clarke 67, Flo 72)
Liverpool 1 (Riedle 45) Att: 34,639

Derby 0
Leicester 4 (Heskey 1, 8, Izzet 2, Marshall 15)
Att: 29,855

Everton 1 (Ferguson 72)
Sheffield Wed 3 (Pembridge 6, 41, Di Canio 90)
Att: 35,497

Leeds 3 (Hasselbaink 16, 28, Kewell 75)
Coventry 3 (Huckerby 20, 34, 62) Att: 36,522

Tottenham 2 (Klinsmann 31, Ferdinand 73)
Newcastle 0 Att: 35,847

West Ham 2 (Sinclair 42, Lomas 82)
Southampton 4 (Le Tissier 40, Ostenstad 63, 86, Palmer 80) Att: 25,878

Monday, April 27

Crystal Palace 0
Man Utd 3 (Scholes 6, Butt 21, Cole 84) Att: 26,180

Wednesday, April 29

Arsenal 1 (Petit 34)
Derby 0 Att: 38,121

Coventry 0
Wimbledon 0 Att: 17,968

Leicester 0
Newcastle 0 Att:21,699

Chelsea 0
Blackburn 1 (Gallacher 48) Att: 33,311

Saturday, May 2

Bolton 5 (Blake 7, Fish 20, Phillips 30, Thompson 70, Holdsworth 79)
Blackburn 1 (Sutton 88)
Newcastle 0 Att: 29,300

Chelsea 2 (Vialli 73, Morris 90)
Bolton 0 Att: 34,845

Crystal Palace 1 (Morrison 90)
Sheffield Wed 0 Att: 16,876

Derby 1 (Wanchope 63)
Liverpool 0 Att: 30,492

Everton 1 (Farrelly 7)
Coventry 1 (Dublin 89) Att: 40,109

Leeds 1 (Haaland 81)
Wimbledon 1 (Ekoku 88) Att: 38,172

Tottenham 1 (Klinsmann 27)
Southampton 1 (Le Tissier 21) Att: 35,995

West Ham 4 (Lampard 15, Abou 31, 74, Sinclair 65)
Leicester 3 (Cottee 59, 83, Heskey 66) Att: 25,781

ENGLAND - FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Arsenal	38	23	9	6	68	33	78
Manchester Utd	38	23	8	7	73	26	77
Liverpool	38	18	11	9	68	42	65
Chelsea	38	20	3	15	71	43	63
Leeds	38	17	8	13	57	46	59
Blackburn	38	16	10	12	57	52	58
Aston Villa	38	17	6	15	49	48	57
West Ham	38	16	8	14	56	57	56
Derby	38	16	7	15	52	49	55
Leicester	38	13	14	11	51	41	53
Coventry	38	12	16	10	46	44	52
Southampton	38	14	6	18	50	55	48
Newcastle	38	11	11	16	35	44	44
Tottenham	38	11	11	16	44	56	44
Wimbledon	38	10	14	14	34	46	44
Sheffield Wed	38	12	8	18	52	67	44
Everton	38	9	13	16	41	56	40
Bolton	38	9	13	16	41	61	40

Le Havre 1 (Pouget pen 33)
Marseille 1 (Moses 10) Att: 16,000

Metz 1 (Rodriguez 4)
Lyon 0 Att: 20,000

Monaco 5 (Trezeguet 15, 33, Ikpeba 26, 36, Giuly 89)
Bordeaux 2 (Wiltord 3, Laslandes 56) Att: 6,000

Rennes 1 (Diawara 73)
Toulouse 0 Att: 15,000

Strasbourg 3 (Arpinon 29, Seo 75, Kinet 85)
Montpellier 0 Att: 18,000

FRANCE - FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Lens	34	21	5	8	55	30	68
Metz	34	20	8	6	48	28	68
Monaco	34	18	5	11	51	33	59
Marseille	34	16	9	9	47	27	57
Bordeaux	34	15	11	8	49	41	56
Lyon	34	16	5	13	39	37	53
Auxerre	34	14	9	11	55	45	51
PSG	34	14	8	12	43	35	50
Bastia	34	13	11	10	36	31	50
Le Havre	34	10	14	10	38	35	44
Nantes	34	11	8	15	35	41	41
Montpellier	34	10	11	13	32	42	41
Strasbourg	34	9	10	15	39	43	37
Rennes	34	9	9	16	36	48	36
Toulouse	34	9	9	16	26	46	36
Guingamp	34	9	8	17	30	42	35
Chateauroux	34	8	7	19	31	59	31
Cannes	34	7	7	20	32	59	28

FRENCH CUP - FINAL

May 2: Paris SG 2 Lens 1

GERMANY

Saturday, May 2

Arminia Bielefeld 2 (Fuchs 55, 74)
Koln 1 (Munteanu 8) Att: 22,512

Bayer Leverkusen 0
Hertha 1 (Rekdal pen 65) Att: 22,500

Borussia Dortmund 0
Hamburg 1 (Salihamidzic 1) Att: 55,000

Borussia MG 5 (Lupescu pen 39, Wynhoff 43, Pflipsen 73, Voronin 86, Pettersson 90)
Hansa Rostock 2 (Neuville 25, Rehmer 57)
Att: 34,500

Duisburg 0
Bayern Munich 0 Att: 33,000

Karlsruhe 4 (Hengen 8, Regis 48, Hassler 75, Metz 90)
Stuttgart 2 (Akpoborie 46, Ristic 89) Att: 33,700

Kaiserslautern 4 (Marschall 24, 55, Wagner 52, Rische 88)
Wolfsburg 0 Att: 38,000

1860 Munich 1 (Gorges 9)
Schalke 0 Att: 45,700

Werder Bremen 1 (Maximov 81)
Bochum 0 Att: 35,800

Saturday, May 9

Bayern Munich 4 (Scholl 47, Matthaus 48, Elber 82, 90)
Borussia Dortmund 0 Att: 63,000

Bochum 1 (Schreiber 38)
Munich 1860 0 Att: 30,000

Hamburg 1 (Dembinski 50)

Complete and return this coupon with your payment to:
World Soccer Subscriptions, PO Box 272, Haywards Heath, West Sussex, RH16 3FS, England.

Yes! I would like to subscribe to World Soccer for:
☐ 2 Years (24 issues) saving 10% and receive a free ball.
☐ 1 Year (12 issues) and receive a free ball.
See grid below for prices.
The subscription is ☐ for myself ☐ a gift for someone else.
Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms:
Address:
Postcode:
Daytime tel. No:
(in case we have a query with your order)
GIFT SUBSCRIPTION DETAILS (PLEASE COMPLETE 'MY DETAILS' SECTION ALSO)
Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms:
Address:
Postcode:
I enclose cheque/international money order for _____ made payable to IPC Magazines Ltd. Or please debit my: ☐ Mastercard ☐ Visa ☐ Amex
Card No.
Expiry Date:
Signature:
The closing date for this offer is 31st July 1998. Please allow up to 6 weeks for delivery of your first subscription issue. Offer open to new subscribers only. Your ball will arrive separately. Please allow 28 days for delivery. For enquiries call +44(0)1444 445555
IPC Magazines, the publisher of World Soccer may pass your name and address to other reputable companies whose products and services may be of interest to you. Please tick this box if you prefer not to receive such offers. ☐

FOR A FASTER ORDER CALL OUR CREDIT CARD HOTLINE +44(0)1622 778778
LINES OPEN MONDAY – FRIDAY 9am –7pm UK time
Quoting code **24D**

FREE MITRE FOOTBALL

We're giving away a FREE Mitre Ultima ball (RRP £14.99) with every subscription received by 31st July 1998.
So subscribe now – and get ready to have a ball!

FREE to new subscribers (RRP £14.99)

Country	1 year You pay + FREE BALL	2 years Full rate	2 years You pay Save 10% + FREE BALL
Europe*	£35.00	£70.00	£63.00
USA*	$65.20	$130.40	$117.35
Australia*	A$100.80	A$201.60	A$181.44
South Africa*	R338.40	R676.80	R609.12
Rest of world*	£45.00	£90.00	£81.00

*Delivery by Airmail

Start your World Cup preparations with a subscription to World Soccer and save yourself up to 10%.

You're guaranteed to get World Soccer delivered to your door every month .

Ladbroke (Gibraltar) Ltd

an easy and comprehensive betting service from the world's largest bookmaker on the world's greatest sport

"Bet Tax Free on Football with the World's best-known bookmaker"

Ladbroke (Gibraltar) Ltd, offer a highly personalised service which we believe cannot be matched by any legal operator.

Now you can bet on football with the security of the world's biggest bookmaker and no deductions for government taxes or levies.

an easy way to bet - contact us now to arrange your account

Simply call the number below to find how you can avail yourself of this unique international advantage-from the winning team of Ladbroke (Gibraltar) Ltd.

Tel: (350) 45375 Fax: (350) 45396

When your opening deposit (minimum £2,000) has been received by our bank we will notify you by phone of your personal account number and our exclusive telephone betting number.

You may then start betting immediately.

To place your bet, telephone our operators quoting your personal account number and give details of your bet. (The minimum transaction per telephone call is £200).

It's as simple as that! Once the results are known, winnings are immediately credited back to your Ladbroke account.

Ladbroke Group has operations in almost 50 countries worldwide and employs over 66,000 people. The group has one of the world's largest commercial betting and gambling organisations, and has operations in the U.K., U.S.A., Belgium, Ireland and Argentina. Additionally, Hilton International, the name synonymous with the best in first-class hotelkeeping, operates over 160 hotels.

Ladbroke Racing U.K. conduct exclusive on-site football betting operations at more than 40 Football League grounds in England and Scotland and were named the Official Bookmaker for the 1996 European Championship by U.E.F.A. the controlling body of European Football.

We have operators ready to take your call in any of the following languages

ENGLISH, FRENCH, ITALIAN, MALAY, CANTONESE, MANDARIN & SPANISH

Conditions

Clients must be over 18 years of age. Service not available to residents of the U.K. Service subject to local legislation.

GREECE

May 3: AEK 1 Athinaikos 1; Kalamata 2 Ionikos 0; OFI 3 Ethnikos P 0; PAOK 4 Panahaiki 1; Panathinaikos 1 Heracles 0; Paniliakos 0 Kavala 2; Proodeytiki 1 Apollon 0; Xanthi 4 Veroia 0.
May 4: Panionios 1 Olympiakos 2.
May 10: AEK 4 Kalamata 2; Athinaikos 0 OFI 2; Ionikos 0 Panathinaikos 1; Heracles 0 Paniliakos 0; Kavala 1 Panionios 0; Olympiakos 5 Apollon 3; Panahaiki 1 Proodeytiki 1; Veroia 1 PAOK 3.

GREECE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Olympiakos	32	28	1	3	85	24	85
Panathinaikos	32	26	1	5	81	24	79
AEK	32	21	7	4	58	29	70
PAOK	32	20	7	5	69	40	67
Ionikos	32	17	7	8	43	29	58
Heracles	32	13	9	10	44	40	48
OFI	32	14	3	15	43	52	45
Xanthi	31	12	6	13	49	49	42
Veroia	32	11	6	15	36	45	39
Paniliakos	32	9	9	14	41	46	36
Apollon	32	10	6	16	34	45	36
Panionios	32	9	5	18	36	51	32
Panahaiki	32	9	5	18	28	55	32
Proodeytiki	32	8	7	17	32	56	31
Kalamata	32	7	8	17	27	47	29
Kavala	32	8	5	19	34	57	29
Athinaikos	32	6	9	17	23	47	27
Ethnikos P	31	7	3	21	24	51	24

HOLLAND

Wednesday, April 22

NAC 1 (Bogdanovic 37)
Vitesse 3 (Curovic 13, 61, Machlas 75) Att: 12,779

Feyenoord 1 (Vos 63)
Roda JC 0 Att: 23,066

Fortuna 1 (Jeffrey 24)
PSV 2 (Bruggink 11, 52) Att: 6,500

Twente 3 (De Witte 6, Steinmann 70, Abbenhues 90)
Heerenveen 1 (Gusatu 19) Att: 9,850

Thursday, April 23

Ajax 6 (Babangida 18, Ronald de Boer 29, 37, Arveladze 35, 44, McCarthy 73)
Willem II 1 (Wijnhard 80) Att: 49,600

Friday, April 24

Volendam 1 (Leeflang 32)
MVV 2 (Taiwo 15, Emerson 70) Att: 2,906

Saturday, April 25

Heerenveen 2 (Gusatu 71, Straal 85)
Fortuna 2 (Hamming 47, Jeffrey 59) Att: 13,750

NEC 2 (Hesp 18, Maes 68)
NAC 0 Att: 5,200

Roda JC 2 (Torma 51, Peeters 78)
Sparta 0 Att: 7,000

Sunday, April 26

De Graafschap 2 (Viscaal 32, 89)
Twente 1 (Oude Kamphuis 50) Att: 7,850

Groningen 1 (Bombarda 48)
Utrecht 2 (John de Jong 57, Asmus 68) Att: 13,800

PSV 3 (Moller 3, Jonk 21, Stinga 36)
Feyenoord 3 (Van Bronckhorst 51, Cruz 70, Van Gastel 73) Att: 29,000

RKC 1 (Schops 47)
Willem II 4 (Arts 15, Schenning 25, Heering 34, Kolkka 56) Att: 5,700

Vitesse 2 (Machlas 27, Jochemsen 47)
Ajax 0 Att: 26,200

Sunday, May 3

Fortuna 4 (Jeffrey 6, Lanckohr 8, 70, Hamming 40)
NAC 1 (Bogdanovic 69) Att: 6,000

De Graafschap 1 (Fuchs 89)
Ajax 8 (McCarthy 17, 45, 78, Litmanen 55, 61, Hoekstra 66, Ronald de Boer 80, Van der Sar 85) Att: 11,000

NEC 1 (Van Eijkeren 3)
Utrecht 0 Att: 5,700

PSV 6 (Nilis 9, 60, Zenden 55, 82, Moller 83, Degryse 88)
Groningen 2 (Bombarda 2, Koeman 13) Att: 28,000

RKC 1 (Schops 44)
MVV 1 (De Jong 57) Att: 5,900

Sparta 1 (D de Nooijer 29)
Twente 1 (De Witte 45) Att: 3,500

Vitesse 2 (Machlas 9, Perovic 14)
Feyenoord 1 (Kalou 57) Att: 24,800

Volendam 4 (Steur 22, Boogers 23, De Vries 60, Gentile 82)
Heerenveen 1 (Samardzic 48) Att: 4,500

Willem II 2 (Koeffen 3, Schenning 47)
Roda JC 4 (Peeters 17, 74, Lawal 42, Tchoutang 82) Att: 10,700

Sunday, May 10

Ajax 1 (Arveladze 69)
Utrecht 2 (John de Jong 9, Mols 30) Att: 48,400

Feyenoord 0
NEC 2 (Pothuizen 10, Shainovski 85) Att: 23,190

Groningen 1 (Rosen 82)
Fortuna 0 Att: 8,200

Heerenveen 3 (Van Nistelrooy 45, 89, Constantinovici 57)
RKC 2 (Petrov 46, Rommedahl 49) Att: 13,500

MVV 1 (Emerson 1)
Vitesse 3 (Shoukov 76, Trustfull 78, Perovic 85) Att: 8,000

NAC 4 (Scheepers 7, Bogdanovic 18, Feskens 21, Arveladze 58)
Volendam 1 (Hans Bond 10) Att: 7,500

Roda JC 1 (Obdam 65)
De Graafschap 2 (Fuchs 20, Hendriks 90) Att: 7,500

Twente 3 (De Witte 14, Van Halst 45, Abbenhues 81)
PSV 0 Att: 13,500

Willem II 3 (Wijnhard 38, 63, Valk 83)
Sparta 0 Att: 13,800

HOLLAND - FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Ajax	34	29	2	3	112	22	89
PSV	34	21	9	4	95	44	72
Vitesse	34	21	7	6	85	48	70
Feyenoord	34	18	7	9	62	40	61
Willem II	34	17	4	13	66	58	55
Heerenveen	34	16	7	11	56	59	55
Fortuna	34	14	6	14	51	53	48
NEC	34	14	2	18	40	57	44
Twente	34	11	10	13	41	42	43
Utrecht	34	13	4	17	56	64	43
De Graafschap	34	11	9	14	45	49	42
NAC Breda	34	12	6	16	41	49	42
Sparta	34	10	11	13	50	59	41
Roda JC	34	10	8	16	44	45	38
MVV	34	9	5	20	35	75	32
RKC	34	8	7	19	48	71	31
Groningen	34	7	10	17	42	65	31
Volendam	34	5	6	23	33	102	21

DUTCH CUP – FINAL

Ajax Amsterdam 5 (Babangida 25, Litmanen 38, 61, 84, Arveladze 79)
PSV Eindhoven 0

HUNGARY

Apr 20: Gazszer 3 Siofok 1.
Apr 25: Bekescsaba 4 Videoton 0; Debrecen 2 Tiszakecske 0; Ferencvaros 4 Kispest Honved 1; Vac 1 Gazszer 1; Siofok 2 MTK 0; Haladas 0 Gyor 0; Vasas 2 Zalaegerszeg 0.
Apr 26: Stadler 0 Ujpest 3.
Apr 27: BVSC 0 Diosgyor 0.
Apr 29: Diosgyor 2 Stadler 2; Gyor 0 Vasas 3; Kispest Honved 0 Bekescsaba 0; MTK 4 BVSC 3; Tiszakecske 1 Ferencvaros 2; Ujpest 3 Haladas 1; Videoton 1 Vac 0; Zalaegerszeg 3 Debrecen 0.
May 2: Bekescsaba 3 Tiszakecske 3; Debrecen 1 Gyor 2; Ferencvaros 3 Zalaegerszeg 2; Stadler 0 MTK 1; Haladas 1 Diosgyor 2.
May 3: BVSC 3 Gazszer 1; Vasas 0 Ujpest 0; Vac 1 Siofok 1; Videoton 2 Kispest Honved 1.
May 8: MTK 0 Haladas 1.
May 9: Diosgyor 1 Vasas 1; Gazszer 3 Stadler 3; Gyor 2 Ferencvaros 3; Kispest Honved 2 Vac 1; Siofok 2 BVSC 1; Tiszakecske 2 Videoton 1; Ujpest 5 Debrecen 0; Zalaegerszeg 1 Bekescsaba 0.

HUNGARY

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Ujpest	30	20	7	3	54	21	67
Ferencvaros	30	19	4	7	56	36	61
Vasas	30	17	6	7	59	34	57
MTK	30	16	5	9	50	31	53
Gyor	30	15	8	7	40	27	53
Vac	30	13	6	11	40	43	45
Zalaegerszeg	30	13	4	13	49	39	43
Gazszer	30	10	12	8	48	40	42
BVSC	30	11	8	11	42	37	41
Diosgyor	30	11	7	12	40	35	40
Debrecen	30	11	7	12	40	45	40
Siofok	30	11	6	13	35	38	39
Haladas	30	8	8	14	34	41	32
Kispest Honved	30	9	5	16	33	48	32
Videoton	30	7	8	15	38	49	29
Bekescsaba	30	7	8	15	25	50	29
Tiszakecske	30	6	8	16	33	68	26
Stadler	30	3	9	18	24	58	18

ISRAEL

Apr 24: Hapoel PT 2 Mac Herzlia 1; Hap Kfar Saba 2 Hap Ashkelon 1.
Apr 25: Maccabi TA 4 Hap Beit Shean 1; Ironi Ashdod 2 Maccabi PT 3; Hap Beer Sheva 1 Hapoel TA 4; Rishon le Zion 5 Hapoel Jm 1; Hapoel Haifa 0 Maccabi Haifa 1; Beitar Jm 3 Bnei Yehuda 1.
May 2: Hap Kfar Saba 4 Ironi Ashdod 1; Maccabi TA 2 Maccabi PT 0; Hap Beit Shean 2 Beitar Jm 3; Bnei Yehuda 4 Hapoel Haifa 0; Maccabi Haifa 1 Rishon le Zion 0; Hapoel Jm 1 Hap Beer Sheva 0; Hapoel TA 1 Hapoel PT 0; Mac Herzlia 2 Hap Ashkelon 0.
May 9: Hap Kfar Saba 1 Mac Herzlia 2; Hap Ashkelon 2 Hapoel TA 3; Hapoel PT 3 Hapoel Jm 2; Hap Beer Sheva 1 Maccabi Haifa 0; Rishon le Zion 1 Bnei Yehuda 2; Hapoel Haifa 5 Hap Beit Shean 2; Beitar Jm 1 Maccabi PT 0; Maccabi TA 7 Ironi Ashdod 1.

ISRAEL - FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Beitar Jm	30	20	9	1	71	33	69
Hapoel TA	30	21	5	4	44	16	68
Hapoel Haifa	30	16	9	5	55	30	57
Maccabi Haifa	30	15	7	8	45	31	52
Hapoel PT	30	12	6	12	41	41	42
Maccabi TA	30	10	9	11	42	35	39
Hap Kfar Saba	30	10	8	12	39	39	38
Mac Herzlia	30	9	9	12	37	40	36
Maccabi PT	30	8	12	10	27	31	36
Rishon le Zion	30	10	6	14	39	48	36
Bnei Yehuda	30	9	7	14	29	38	34
Hapoel Jm	30	8	10	12	35	45	34
Ironi Ashdod	30	8	9	13	39	57	33
Hap Beit Shean	30	8	7	15	35	51	31
Hap Beer Sheva	30	7	9	14	38	57	30
Hap Ashkelon	30	5	6	19	26	50	21

ITALY

Sunday, April 26

Bari 0
Vicenza 0 Att: 17,841

Brescia 1 (Pirlo 79)
Bologna 3 (Baggio 39, 62, Paganin 90) Att: 14,985

Empoli 5 (Tonetto 3, Esposito 19, 60, Ametrano 42, Lucenti 74)
Lecce 1 (Casale 10) Att: 14,920

Juventus 1 (Del Piero 21)
Inter 0 Att: 64,001

Lazio 1 (Nedved 57)
Parma 2 (Sensini 71, Stanic 74) Att: 36,795

Milan 0
Napoli 0 Att: 47,495

Piacenza 3 (Piovani 2, pen 53, Murgita 64)
Atalanta 0 Att: 13,456

Sampdoria 2 (Montella 38, 77)
Fiorentina 0 Att: 23,346

Udinese 4 (Bierhoff 23, 89, Calori 59, Poggi 73)
Roma 2 (Totti 45, 72) Att: 22,604

Saturday, May 2

Lecce 1 (Palmieri 43)
Lazio 0 Att: 8,498

Sunday, May 3

Atalanta 2 (Caccia 19, Magallanes 81)
Bari 0 Att: 16,595

Bologna 2 (Baggio pen 14, Paramatti 17)
Empoli 2 (Esposito 42, Cappellini pen 90) Att: 32,139

Fiorentina 5 (Batistuta 1, 40, Oliveira 35, Edmundo 38, Schwarz 48)
Brescia 1 (Hubner 54) Att: 30,832

Inter 0
Piacenza 0 Att: 65,484

Napoli 1 (Turrini pen 12)
Udinese 3 (Poggi 4, Bierhoff 45, 87) Att: 28,477

Parma 2 (Chiesa 35, Sensini 79)
Sampdoria 2 (Soares 66, Boghossian 87) Att: 22,689

Roma 5 (Candela 16, Di Biagio pen 20, 29, Sergio 39, Delvecchio 82)
Milan 0 Att: 55,125

Vicenza 0
Juventus 0 Att: 19,984

Sunday, May 10

Bari 2 (Ventola 86, Masinga 89)
Inter 1 (Ronaldo 34) Att: 48,614

Brescia 2 (Adani 57, Neri 81)
Napoli 1 (Bellucci 56) Att: 5,383

Empoli 3 (Esposito pen 60, Bonomi 76, Baldini 90)
Vicenza 2 (Ambrosetti 31, Schenardi pen 87) Att: 19,060

Juventus 3 (Inzaghi 34, 50, 81)
Bologna 2 (Kolyvanov 11, Baggio 56) Att: 60,251

Lazio 1 (Serena og 42)
Fiorentina 4 (Oliveira 13, Edmundo 24, Batistuta 41, Rui Costa 84) Att: 39,929

Milan 1 (Weah 56)
Parma 1 (Cruz og 16) Att: 47,484

Piacenza 3 (Piovani pen 45, Murgita 57, Valtolina 90)
Roma 3 (Di Francesco 45, Totti pen 52, Sergio 86) Att: 14,533

Sampdoria 1 (Scarchilli 16)
Lecce 1 (Cozza 73) Att: 21,199

Udinese 1 (Calori 90)
Atalanta 0 Att: 23,097

Saturday, May 16

Atalanta 1 (Caccia pen 45)
Juventus 1 (Fonseca 68)

Bologna 2 (R Baggio pen 41, 69)
Lazio 1 (Fuser 50)

Fiorentina 2 (Robbiati 50, Kanchelskis 56)
Milan 0

Inter 4 (Colonnese 22, Bettella og 32, Ronaldo pen 60, 72)
Empoli 1 (Cappellini pen 78)

Lecce 1 (Palmieri pen 90)
Piacenza 3 (Murgita 40, Vierchowod 50, Piovani pen 71)

Brian Glanville's LAST WORD

With luck, Argentina

Brazilian veterans may be no match for Passarella's young charges

WHAT OF Brazil? Before that friendly game against Argentina in Rio, Daniel Passarella, the Argentine coach and former captain, was at pains to tell us that whoever won or lost, it would have little effect on the World Cup.

After Argentina had won, it was, predictably, Brazil's Mario Lobo Zagallo who was deprecating the significance of the result.

I think it mattered quite a lot; more than Brazil's indifferent displays in the redundant Confederations Cup (thank you, Joao Havelange) in Saudi Arabia, more than their defeat by the USA in the equally redundant Gold Cup, for which they were not even technically qualified. And in which, in any case, they put out a team full of reserves.

Appointing Zico as lieutenant to Zagallo displeased the veteran coach, but was a substantial straw in the wind, indicating that the Brazilian federation was none too sure of him.

As long ago as the time of the Riyadh tournament, Pele was criticising the team on the grounds that far too much depended on moments of individual brilliance; but to be fair you could have said just the same thing about the 1994 World Cup, when it is conceivable that Brazil would have come out on top without Romario.

Zagallo admits that the present team is largely an elderly one, and talks of the importance of potential substitutions of his veterans; hardly encouraging words to hear on the eve of a World Cup. He says that his only true leader is the 34-year-old Dunga, who stayed in Japan when Argentina beat Brazil, and he thinks another 34-year-old, Bebeto, who did so well in the US tournament, still has much to offer.

In 1970, says Zagallo, he had an abundance of leaders, among them Gerson, Rivelino, Carlos Alberto, Pele, even the young Clodoaldo, whose foolish back-heel gave away Italy's equaliser in that otherwise one-sided Final.

I'm not convinced by Passarella as a manager, and will be interested to see whether he achieves his desire to find a club in Italy at the end of the tournament in France.

His stand-off with Gabriel Batistuta was ridiculous; leaving his most prolific goalscorer out of the side for months during the qualifying tournament for apparently subjective reasons could have been very costly. But just as Napoleon, when promoting a general to marshal, always asked, "Is he lucky?", so I believe that Passarella is moving into a lucky streak. Not least because he seems to have so many players in form.

When I watched Inter take Lazio to pieces in the UEFA Cup Final, I could scarcely fail to be impressed by the South American talent on show.

Ronaldo, of course; he was subdued by Argentina in Rio but they'd be crazy to presume on it. Ivan Zamorano, shrewdly picked for the game by Gigi Simone, Inter's manager, and the star of the show with a goal, an assist and a shot that hit a post. Inter's two excellent Argentinians, Diego Simeone, whose long pass made Zamorano the traumatising first goal, and Javier Zanetti, whose thundering shot, after Zamorano's header, brought the second.

Add other Argentinians in Juan Veron, the versatile, lively Sampdoria midfielder, Marcelo Gallardo, who will make bullets for the attackers to fire, and Claudio Lopez, scorer of the winner in Rio, and you have quite a team.

Winning player, winning coach...Daniel Passarella lifts the World Cup in 1978

RUSSIA

Apr 19: Torpedo 0 Lokomotiv M 0.
Apr 25: Chernomorets 1 Rostselmash 1; Zenit 3 Shinnik 0; Lokomotiv M 0 Rotor 1; Dinamo 0 Torpedo 0; Zhemchuzhina 2 CSKA 1; Alaniya 2 Spartak 1; Uralan 2 Tyumen 1; Kryliya Sovetov 0 Baltika 0.
May 2: Rotor 0 Dinamo 0; Shinnik 0 Lokomotiv M 1; Chernomorets 0 Zenit 0; Tyumen 0 Kryliya Sovetov 3; Spartak 1 Uralan 0; CSKA 0 Alaniya 0; Torpedo 0 Zhemchuzhina 1; Rostselmash 0 Baltika 1.
May 9: Zenit 3 Rostselmash 0; Lokomotiv M 1 Chernomorets 1; Dinamo 1 Shinnik 1; Zhemchuzhina 1 Rotor 1; Alaniya 0 Torpedo 2; Uralan 1 CSKA 2; Kryliya Sovetov 0 Spartak 2; Baltika 2 Tyumen 0.

RUSSIA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Zenit	7	4	2	1	12	5	14
Alaniya	7	4	2	1	9	5	14
Rotor	7	3	4	0	13	7	13
Baltika	7	3	3	1	7	5	12
Spartak	6	3	1	2	8	5	10
Rostselmash	7	2	3	2	9	8	9
Chernomorets	7	1	6	0	7	6	9
Zhemchuzhina	7	2	3	2	6	7	9
Lokomotiv M	6	2	2	2	6	4	8
Kryliya Sovetov	7	2	2	3	7	8	8
Uralan	7	2	1	4	6	9	7
CSKA	6	1	3	2	6	7	6
Torpedo	7	1	3	3	5	6	6
Shinnik	7	1	3	3	4	11	6
Dinamo	6	0	5	1	3	5	5
Tyumen	7	1	1	5	3	13	4

SCOTLAND

Saturday, April 25

Celtic 0
Hibernian 0 Att: 49,500

Dundee Utd 0
St Johnstone 2 (Jenkinson 66, O'Boyle 89) Att: 8,045

Hearts 0
Rangers 3 (Gattuso 48, 78, Albertz 65) Att: 17,415

Kilmarnock 2 (Vareille 33, 85)
Aberdeen 1 (Dodds 44) Att: 8,212

Motherwell 1 (Shivute 28)
Dunfermline 3 (Smith 18, Ireland 31, Britton 54) Att: 5,745

Saturday, May 2

Aberdeen 2 (Jess 26, Newell 46)
Hearts 2 (McCann 10, McPherson 29) Att: 12,899

Rangers 0
Kilmarnock 1 (Mitchell 90) Att: 50,116

Hibernian 1 (Brebner 31)
Dundee Utd 2 (Olofsson 72, 78) Att: 13,413

St Johnstone 3 (Jenkinson 15, 88, McCluskey 70)
Motherwell 2 (Martin 4, Coyle pen 58) Att: 6,754

Sunday, May 3

Dunfermline 1 (Faulconbridge 83)
Celtic 1 (Donnelly 35) Att: 12,866

Saturday, May 9

Celtic 2 (Larsson 3, Brattbakk 72)
St Johnstone 0 Att: 50,500

Dundee Utd 1 (Zetterlund 65)
Rangers 2 (Laudrup 31, Albertz pen 53) Att: 14,200

Hearts 2 (Adam 22, Holmes 83)
Dunfermline 0 Att: 13,888

Kilmarnock 1 (Roberts 15)
Hibernian 1 (Crawford 90) Att: 12,393

Motherwell 1 (Ross 67)
Aberdeen 2 (Dodds 2, 22) Att: 5,861

SCOTLAND - FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Celtic	36	22	8	6	64	24	74
Rangers	36	21	9	6	76	38	72
Hearts	36	19	10	7	70	46	67
Kilmarnock	36	13	11	12	40	52	50
St.Johnstone	36	13	9	14	38	42	48
Aberdeen	36	9	12	15	39	53	39
Dundee.Utd	36	8	13	15	43	51	37
Dunfermline	36	8	13	15	43	68	37
Motherwell	36	9	7	20	46	64	34
Hibernian	36	6	12	18	38	59	30

SCOTTISH CUP – FINAL

Hearts 2 (Cameron 2pen, Adam 53)
Rangers 1 (McCoist 81) Att: 48,946

SLOVAKIA

SLOVAKIA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
FC Kosice	26	18	5	3	64	20	59
Trnava	26	17	5	4	52	29	56
Inter	26	15	5	6	44	24	50
Trencin	26	14	4	8	43	27	46
Slovan	26	10	8	8	36	33	38
R.Sobota	26	10	7	9	30	27	37
Zilina	26	10	6	10	21	24	36
Ruzomberok	26	9	8	9	33	38	35
Petrzalka	26	9	5	12	23	26	32
Prievidza	26	8	8	10	31	37	32
Humenne	26	10	2	14	32	49	32
B.Bystrica	26	7	9	10	28	35	30
Tatran	26	7	7	12	23	36	28
Bardejov	26	6	5	15	21	33	23
Lokomotiva	26	6	5	15	27	48	23
Dunajska	26	5	5	16	21	43	20

SLOVENIA

SLOVENIA - FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Maribor	32	21	3	8	57	30	66
Mura	32	18	7	7	56	38	61
Gorica	32	18	4	10	59	33	58
Ajdovscina	32	16	4	12	57	41	52
Olimpija	32	12	11	9	55	50	47
Publikum	32	12	7	13	54	52	43
Velenje	32	10	11	11	36	32	41
Beltinci	32	8	6	18	40	68	30
Korotan	32	7	8	17	25	57	29
Vevce	32	4	7	21	31	69	19

SPAIN

Friday, April 24

Betis Sevilla 2 (Olias 65, Alfonso 88)
Mallorca 1 (Romero 32) Att: 40,000

Saturday, April 25

Atletico Madrid 2 (Paunovic 18, Jose Mari 83)
Tenerife 2 (Aguilera og 26, Alexis pen 90) Att: 25,000

Celta Vigo 1 (Moises 60)
Athletic Bilbao 1 (J. Etxeberria 5) Att: 29,000

Compostela 3 (Chiba 4, Bellido 32, Penev pen 44)
Valencia 1 (Mendieta pen 38) Att: 12,000

Espanyol 1 (Sergio 56)
Barcelona 1 (Figo 37) Att: 15,000

Merida 2 (Biagini 64, Sabas 66)
Real Madrid 2 (Hierro pen 61, Suker 80) Att: 15,000

Real Oviedo 0
Real Valladolid 1 (Victor 55) Att: 20,000

Real Zaragoza 2 (Radimov 19, Jamelli 46)
Racing Santander 0 Att: 20,000

Salamanca 4 (Loren 55, Pauleta 61, 65, Manolo og 84)
Sporting Gijon 0 Att: 17,999

Monday, April 27

Real Sociedad 1 (Cvitanovic 50)
La Coruna 1 (Armando 23) Att: 25,000

Saturday, May 2

La Coruna 1 (Scaloni 81)
Valencia 2 (Mendieta pen 65, 90) Att: 20,000

Athletic Bilbao 3 (Ciganda 45, Urzaiz 70, Lasa 90)
Real Oviedo 0 Att: 43,500

Barcelona 1 (Bogarde 24)
Betis Sevilla 3 (Alfonso 45, Finidi 58, 89) Att: 40,000

Celta Vigo 3 (Berges 10, Sanchez 61, Moises pen 89)
Compostela 3 (Chiba 27, Lekumberri 37, Sion 80) Att: 28,000

Racing Santander 1 (Correa 90)
Espanyol 1 (Luis 10) Att: 20,000

Mallorca 2 (Galvez 44, Moya 47)
Atletico Madrid 1 (Paunovic 16) Att: 18,500

Real Valladolid 0
Merida 0 Att: 17,300

Sporting Gijon 0
Real Sociedad 2 (Cvitanovic 20, Aldeondo 90) Att: 14,881

Tenerife 2 (Domingos 80, Pinilla 84)
Salamanca 0 Att: 22,000

Monday, May 4

Real Madrid 0
Zaragoza 2 (Jamelli pen 57, Lopez 79) Att: 40,000

Saturday, May 9

Espanyol 1 (Roberto 73)
Real Madrid 0 Att: 29,400

Valencia 2 (Ilie 26, Lopez 70)
Sporting Gijon 2 (Miguel 40, David Cano 42) Att: 49,000

Sunday, May 10

Atletico Madrid 5 (Paunovic 19, Fernando Couto og 25, Vieri 61, 83, Caminero 72)
Barcelona 2 (Rivaldo 11, De la Pena 82) Att: 55,000

La Coruna 2 (Naybet 37, Djalminha pen 40)
Compostela 6 (Sion 17, 6, 50, Bellido 32, Fabiano 52, Viedma 73) Att: 23,000

Merida 0
Athletic Bilbao 0 Att: 14,000

Betis Sevilla 0
Racing Santander 2 (Bestsjastnych 47, Oscar Arpon 74) Att: 37,000

Real Oviedo 3 (Dubovsky 7, Ivan Iglesias 57, Losada 90)
Celta Vigo 1 (Moises 88) Att: 22,000

Real Sociedad 1 (De Pedro pen 66)
Tenerife 1 (Emerson 44) Att: 25,000

Real Zaragoza 0
Real Valladolid 0 Att: 18,000

Salamanca 1 (Popescu 76)
Mallorca 1 (Amato 8) Att: 21,000

Saturday, May 16

Real Madrid 1 (Mijatovic 76)
Real Betis 0

Santander 0
Atletico Madrid 1 (Andrei 1)

Tenerife 3 (Felipe 28, Domingos 80, Jokanovic pen 82)
Valencia 2 (Ilie 17, Fernando 78)

Valladolid 0
Espanyol 0

Sporting Gijon 0
Deportivo 3 (Bassir 6, 55, Conceicao 89)

Athletic Bilbao 1 (Etxeberria 40)
Real Zaragoza 0

Barcelona 1 (Jofre 90)
Salamanca 4 (Silvani 17, Pauleta 53, 56, Brito 73)

Celta Vigo 2 (Moises 13, Gudelj 58)
Merida 0

Compostela 1 (Penev 20)
Oviedo 0

Mallorca 0
Sociedad 1 (Kovacevic 88)

SPAIN - FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Barcelona	38	23	5	10	78	56	74
Athletic Blbao	38	17	14	7	52	42	65
Real Sociedad	38	16	15	7	60	37	63
Real Madrid	38	17	12	9	63	45	63
Mallorca	38	16	12	10	55	39	60
Celta	38	17	9	12	54	47	60
Atletico Madrid	38	16	12	10	79	56	60
Betis	38	17	8	13	49	50	59
Valencia	38	16	7	15	58	52	55
Espanyol	38	12	17	9	44	31	53
Valladolid	38	13	11	14	36	47	50
Deportivo	38	12	13	13	44	46	49
Zaragoza	38	12	12	14	45	53	48
Racing	38	12	9	17	46	55	45
Salamanca	38	12	9	17	46	46	45
Tenerife	38	11	12	15	44	57	45
Compostela	38	11	11	16	56	66	44
Oviedo	38	9	13	16	36	51	40
Merida	38	9	12	17	33	53	39
Sporting	38	2	7	29	31	80	13

SPANISH CUP - FINAL

Apr 29: Barcelona 1 Mallorca 1
Barcelona win on pens

SWEDEN

SWEDEN

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
IFK Norrkoping	5	3	2	0	7	3	11
Vastra Frolunda	5	3	0	2	7	5	9
Orgryte	4	2	2	0	7	3	8
Hacken	5	2	2	1	5	5	8
Hammarby	5	1	3	1	7	6	6
AIK	4	1	3	0	4	3	6
Halmstad	5	2	0	3	7	7	6
Helsingborg	5	1	3	1	2	2	6
IFK Gothenburg	4	1	2	1	3	3	5
Malmo	5	1	2	2	7	8	5
Trelleborg	5	1	2	2	4	6	5
Elfsborg	5	0	4	1	5	6	4
Oster	4	1	1	2	3	6	4
Orebro	5	0	2	3	3	8	2

SWITZERLAND

Saturday, April 25

Lausanne 2 (N'Kufo 29, Douglas 61)
Lucerne 0 Att: 4,300

FC Sion 1 (Ouattara pen 90)
Grasshopper 2 (Turkyilmaz 39, Subiat 70) Att: 12,200

Zurich 1 (Yekini pen 75)
Servette 1 (Paisley 31) Att: 16,500

Sunday, April 26

Aarau 0
St Gallen 1 (Zwyssig 90) Att: 2,800

Tuesday, April 28

Grasshoppers 3 (Turkyilmaz 68, Subiat 76, 82)
Lausanne 0 Att: 4,800

Wednesday, April 29

Lucerne 2 (Joller 15, T. Wyss 23)
FC Sion 3 (Chassot 31, 62, Wolf 41) Att: 3,195

St Gallen 0
Zurich 0 Att: 8,600

Servette 1 (Siljak 11)
Aarau 1 (Aloisi 81) Att: 4,000

Saturday, May 2

St Gallen 1 (Yakin 52)
Grasshopper 2 (Kawelaschwili 21, Subiat 67) Att: 11,900

Servette 1 (Ouajda 56)
Lucerne 1 (Koilov 59) Att: 4,000

Zurich 2 (Nonda 42, Nixon 79)
Lausanne 2 (N'Kufo 45, Puce 62) Att: 6,900

Sunday, May 3

Aarau 1 (Previtali 79)
FC Sion 2 (Derivaz 45, Ouattara 61) Att: 2,900

Friday, May 8

Grasshopper 2 (Turkyilmaz 51, Vogel pen 57)
Zurich 1 (Yekini 36) Att: 13,000

Saturday, May 9

Lausanne 4 (N'Diaye 8, 24, N'Kufo 49, 52)
St Gallen 1 (Vidalle 64) Att: 3,750

Lucerne 0
Aarau 0 Att: 3,370

Sunday, May 10

Sion 2 (Noufa 35, Wolf 72)
Servette 0 Att: 12,500

SWITZERLAND - FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Grasshopper	12	9	1	2	32	14	51
Servette	12	5	6	1	15	9	41
Zuerich	12	5	5	2	21	14	35
Lausanne	12	3	4	5	11	15	34
Sion	12	5	3	4	19	18	33
St.Gallen	12	3	4	5	9	16	28
Aarau	12	1	4	7	12	20	25
Luzern	12	1	5	6	10	23	23

SWISS CUP - SEMI FINAL

May 5: FC Wil 0 Lausanne 2

TURKEY

Apr 25: Ankaragucu 0 Samsunspor 1; Bursaspor 1 G.Antep 2; Karabukspor 1 Trabzonspor 1; Fenerbahce 2 Besiktas 0; Galatasaray 5 Kayserispor 1; Istanbulspor 2 Altay 2; Dardanelspor 3 Antalyaspor 1; Kocaelispor 1 G.Birligi 1; Vanspor 0 Sekerspor 0.
May 1: Samsunspor 2 Bursaspor 0.
May 2: Trabzonspor 3 Ankaragucu 1; G.Birligi 1 Vanspor 2.
May 3: Altay 5 Karabukspor 1; Besiktas 0 Antalyaspor 1; Kayserispor 3 Dardanelspor 0; Galatasaray 4 Istanbulspor 1; G.Antep 3 Kocaelispor 0; Sekerspor 1 Fenerbahce 1.
May 8: Ankaragucu 2 Altay 3.
May 9: Karabukspor 2 Galatasaray 3; Kocaelispor 4 Samsunspor 0.
May 10: Antalyaspor 3 Sekerspor 3; Bursaspor 1 Trabzonspor 2; Fenerbahce 2 G.Birligi 1; Istanbulspor 1 Kayserispor 3; Dardanelspor 0 Besiktas 0; Vanspor 0 G.Antep 0.

TURKEY - FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Galatasaray	34	23	6	5	86	43	75
Fenerbahce	34	21	8	5	59	25	71
Trabzonspor	34	19	9	6	68	42	66
Istanbulspor	34	14	12	8	60	42	54
Samsunspor	34	14	7	13	42	42	49
Besiktas	34	13	9	12	56	41	48
Altay	34	12	11	11	45	52	47
Bursaspor	34	12	9	13	46	50	45
Karabukspor	34	13	5	16	34	50	44
Kocaelispor	34	12	7	15	46	46	43
Dardanelspor	34	10	11	13	37	40	41
Antalyaspor	34	10	11	13	51	55	41
Ankaragucu	34	11	8	15	40	47	41
G.Antep	34	9	11	14	39	42	38
G.Birligi	34	9	11	14	42	46	38
Kayserispor	34	11	5	18	42	60	38
Sekerspor	34	9	9	16	41	67	36
Vanspor	34	5	9	20	26	70	24

UKRAINE

UKRAINE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Shakhtar	24	16	5	3	45	18	53
Dynamo	22	16	3	3	47	13	51
Vorskla	24	14	4	6	34	30	46
Dnipro	24	14	1	9	38	23	43
Karpaty	24	12	7	5	27	18	43
Nyva Tr	24	12	4	8	34	25	40
Metalurh D	23	9	6	8	21	19	33
CSKA	23	8	6	9	25	21	30
Zirka Nibas	24	8	5	11	22	33	29
Kryvbas	24	6	9	9	25	26	27
Tavriya	24	7	6	11	30	33	27
Metalurh M	24	6	8	10	23	40	26
Metalurh Z	24	6	6	12	27	36	24
Chornomorets	24	5	7	12	22	31	22
Prykarpattya	24	4	8	12	23	36	20
Torpedo	24	2	5	17	13	54	11

WALES

WALES - FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Barry Town	38	33	5	0	134	31	104
Newtown	38	23	9	6	101	47	78
Ebbw Vale	38	22	11	5	94	55	77
Inter Cable-Tel	38	23	5	10	58	28	74
Cwmbran Town	38	22	7	9	78	47	73
Bangor City	38	20	8	10	72	54	68
Connah's Quay	38	18	12	8	75	54	66
Rhyl	38	17	10	11	61	49	61
Conwy United	38	15	8	15	66	59	53
Aberystwyth Town	38	13	12	13	64	63	51
Caersws	38	14	4	20	64	71	46
Carmarthen Town	38	11	11	16	57	72	44
Caernarfon Town	38	12	7	19	57	66	41
TNS Llansantffraid	38	9	15	14	54	67	42
Rhayader Town	38	11	6	21	55	78	39
Haverfordwest C	38	10	8	20	54	87	38
Porthmadog	38	10	5	23	55	77	35
Flint Town Utd	38	9	7	22	50	77	34
Welshpool Town	38	6	7	25	55	97	25
Cemaes Bay	38	2	3	33	30	155	9

YUGOSLAVIA

Apr 25: Vojvodina 0 Buducnost 0; Zemun 2 Partizan 3; Rad 0 Red Star 1; Cukaricki 1 Obilic 3; Hajduk 3 Proleter 1; Mladost 2 Zeleznik 1.
Apr 29: Buducnost 1 Zeleznik 0; Proleter 1 Mladost 0; Obilic 2 Hajduk 0; Red Star 3 Cukaricki 0; Partizan 1 Rad 0; Vojvodina 3 Zemun 1.
May 2: Zemun 0 Buducnost 0; Rad 2 Vojvodina 0; Cukaricki 0 Partizan 1; Hajduk 0 Red Star 1; Mladost 0 Obilic 2.
May 3: Zeleznik 2 Proleter 3.
May 9: Buducnost 2 Proleter 1; Obilic 2 Zeleznik 0; Red Star 2 Mladost 0; Partizan 1 Hajduk 1; Vojvodina 2 Cukaricki 0; Zemun 4 Rad 0.

YUGOSLAVIA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Obilic	32	27	4	1	71	18	85
Red Star	32	27	3	2	85	21	84
Partizan	32	22	4	6	73	36	70
Vojvodina	32	14	7	11	57	61	49
Rad	32	11	6	15	31	39	39
Zemun	32	10	8	14	38	50	38
Buducnost	32	8	9	15	27	49	33
Hajduk	32	9	5	18	30	51	32
Proleter	32	10	1	21	40	63	31
Cukaricki	32	9	3	20	32	45	30
Zeleznik	32	8	5	19	41	61	29
Mladost	32	8	3	21	23	54	27

USA

Week ending Sunday, April 26

New England 3 (Moore 25, Torres 33, Burns 50)
Miami Fusion 0 Att: 15,326

MetroStars 4 (Rooney 26, Savarese pen 66, Hurtado 69, Lalas 90)
San Jose Clash 3 (Lewis 10, 77, Cerritos 16) Att: 17,380

Colorado Rapids 4 (Paule 26, Waldir 35, 48, Bravo 80)
Chicago Fire 4 (Kosecki 10, Klopas 39, 43, Marsch 87) Att: 10,736
Colorado Rapids won on shoot-outs

LA Galaxy 5 (Welton 4, Machon 38, Cienfuegos pen 52, Jones 68, Welton 71)
Tampa Bay 1 (Ralston 26) Att: 23,121

Kansas City Wizards 1 (Tinsley 30)
Dallas Burn 3 (Elliott 50, Damian 68, Washington 83) Att: 13,134

Washington DC 1 (Moreno 89)
Columbus Crew 1 (John 4) Att: 11,338
DC United won on shoot-outs

Week ending Sunday, May 3

DC United 3 (Harkes 11, 59, Lassiter 70)
San Jose Clash 1 (Lozzano 25) Att: 9,755

Kansas City Wizards 0
LA Galaxy 2 (Cienfuegos 39, Vasquez 77) Att: 4,406

Tampa Bay 0
Columbus Crew 1 (Yeagley 59) Att: 4,892

Miami Fusion 3 (Stebbins 41, Vandreuil 52, 65)
Colorado Rapids 2 (Harris 77, Marquinho 90) Att: 10,092

Chicago Fire 1 (Klopas 9)
Washington DC 3 (Lassiter 19, Etcheverry 86, Olsen 88) Att: 27,136

Tampa Bay 0
MetroStars 1 (Sonora 75) Att: 6,142

San Jose Clash 1 (Barrett 36)
New England 3 (Baba 21, Goulooze 41, Gorter 63) Att: 13,563

SOUTH AMERICA

LIBERTADORES CUP

Second round - 1st legs

April 15 - Rio de Janeiro (Braz)
Vasco Da Gama (Brazil) 2 (Luizao 27, Donizete 58)
Cruzeiro (Brazil) 1 (Marcelo pen 21)
HT: 1-1.
Vasco: Carlos Germano, Marica, Mauro Galvao, Geder, Felipe, Nelson, Nasa, Pedrinho, Vagner, Donizete, Luisao.
Cruizeiro: Dida, Gustavo,Gottardo, Marcelo Paulista, Gilberto, Marcos Paulo, Valdir, Ricardinho, Elivelton, Bentinho, Marcelo.

April 15 - Asuncion (Parag)
Cerro Porteno (Par) 1 (Paredes 75)
America (Col) 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** M. Sanchez (Chil). **Att:** 5,000
C. Porteno: A. Bobadilla, H. Blanco, G. Portanova, P.da Silva, D. Gavilan, H. Da Silva (M. Dominguez 65), R. Gomez, H. Ovelar (Paredes 45), H. Ovelar, F. Caballero, e. Fernandez.
America: D. Gomez, J. Cardona (R. Tierradentro 45), F. Asprilla (sent off 76), W. Ortegon, G. Gonzalez, N. Villarreal, C. Gutierrez (semt off 15), w. Zapata, r. Ramirez, F. Oviedo, R. Perez.

April 15 - Montevideo (Urug)
Nacional (Uru) 1 (Sosa 40)
Gremio (Bra) 1 (Guilherme 51)
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** U. Aquino (Parag). **Att:** 53,000
Nacional: G. Munua, C. de los Santos, D. Rodriguez, Jorgeao, F. Bergara (sent off). R. Lemos (M. Regueiro), C. Camejo, g. Guigou (J. Delgado), W. Coelho, M Nunez (G. Alvez), R. Sosa.
Gremio: Danrlei, Dario (Itaqui), Scheidt (sent off), Ronaldo Alves, Roger, Goiano, Fabinho, Tinga, Ronaldinho (Djair), Guilherme, Maurilhio (sent off).

April 16 - Guayaquil (Ecuad)
Barcelona (Ecu) 2 (A. Delgado 47, M. Morales 90 pen)
Colo Colo (Chi) 1 (M. Neira 74)
HT: 0-0.

April 16 - Bucaramanga (Col)
Bucaramanga (Col) 1 (Restrepo pen 71)
Bolivar (Bol) 2 (Sergio Joao 8, 40)
HT: 0-1. Ref: A. Tejada (Peru). Att: 10,000.
Bucaramanga: J. Castaneda, G. Restrepo. P. Casquete, M. Galarcio, L. Romero, A. Lunca, M. Martinez (F. Guiran 46), O. Flavient, N. Gomez (A. Nieto 46), H. Vasquez, O. Ballesteros (D. Pizarro 65).
Bolivar: D. Rojas, E. Jiguchi, M. Rimba, M. Sandy, r. Salguero (Zoca 67), F. Ochoaizpur, M. Mercado, V. Soria, L. Cristaldo, S. Joao, R. Cueto (J. Gottardy 67).

April 22 - Lima (Peru)
Alianza Lima (Per) 1 (M. Asprilla 51)
Penarol (Uru) 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** R. Ortube (Bol). **Att:** 15,000.
Alianza: J. Battaglia, C. Basombrio, S. Baylon, F. Ruiz, M. Salazar, P. Hinostroza, J. Jayo, J. Bazalar, A. Yanez (J. Saavedra 80), M. Asprilla (R. Silva 82), D. Chevez.
Penarol: C. Flores, S. Garcia, O. Aguirregaray, J. de los Santos, R. Lima, I. Borja, (A. Gonzalez 73), R. Pereira (L. Barbos 66), P. Bengoechea, M. de Souza, a. Pacheco, W. Pandiani (J. Franco 60).

April 22 - Mexico City (Mex)
America (Mex) 1 (Cedres 31)
River Plate (Arg) 1 (Netto 4)
HT: 1-1. **Ref:** G. Mendez (Urug). **Att:** 50,000.
America: H. Pineda, V. Santibanez, R. Gutierrez, J. Salgado, I. Hierro, S. Mercado, L. Rodriguez (R. Valenzuela 52, S. Zarate 85), R. Lara, A. Mohamed, G. Cedres, C. Torres (Zague 60).
River Plate: R. Romano, H. Diaz, J. Paz, e. Berrizzo, J. Sorbin, R. Monserrat, C. Netto, m. Gomez, S. Solari, S. Rambert, J. Angel (P. Aimar 82).

April 23 - Santa Fe (Arg)
Colon Santa Fe (Arg) 3 (Fuertes 30, 34, Aquino 62)
Olimpia (Par) 2 (Monzon 55, Caballero 80)
HT: 2-0. **Ref:** A. Pereira (Braz).
Colon: Burtovoy, Ibarra, Morant, Rodriguez Pena, Unali, Aquino, Marini (Favre 77), Agoglia (Uliambre 67), Saralegui, Fuertese, Sandoval (Castillo 71).
Olimpia: Tavarelli, Valdez, Caceres, Zelaya, S. Suarez, Jara Heyn (Benitez 79), Paredes, Monzon, L. Romero, G. Gonzalez (Franco 72), Caballero (Torres 83).

Second round - nd legs

April 29 - Porto Alegre (Bra)
Gremio (Bra) 4 (Guilherme 4, Roger 15, Goiano 28, Tinga 44)
Nacional (Uru) 0
HT: 4-0.
Gremio: Danrlei, Itaqui, Rodrigo, Rivarola, Roger, Fabinho, Goiano, Ailton, Tinga, Ronaldo, Guilherme.
Nacional: Munua, De los Santos, Barios, Jorgao, Regueiro, Guigou, Camejo, Baltierra, Coelho, Delgado, r. Sosa.
**Gremio won 5-1 on agg*

April 29 - La Paz (Bol)
Bolivar (Bolivia) 1 (Jiguchi)
Bucaramanga (Col) 0
Ref: J. Larrondia (Urug).
Bolivar: D. Rojas, F. Ochaizpur. M. Rimba, (R. Vaca), M. Sandy, E. Jiguchi, M. Merado, V. Soria, L. Pizarro (J. Gottardy), L. Cristaldo, Sergio Joao, R. Cueto (R. Salguero).
Bucaramanga: J. Castaneda, G. Restrepo, P. Casquete, M. Galarcio. A. Romero, A. Luna, M. Benitez (A. Nieto), M. Ibanez, L. Espana (L. Lopez), O. Flavien, O. Ballesteros.
**Bolicar won 3-1 on agg*

April 29 - Montevideo (Urug)
Penarol (Uru) 2 (De Souza 19, Aguilera 26)
Alianza Lima (Per) 1 (Asprilla 51)
HT: 2-0. **Ref:** E. Gonzalez (Par). **Att:** 35,000.
Penarol: C. Flores, S. Garcia, O. Aguirregaray, J. de los Santos, R. Lima, M. De Souza (N. Rotundo), D. Dorta (W. Pandiani). P. Bengoechea, A. Pacheco, C. Aguilera (C. Macchi), J. Franco.
Alianza: J. Battaglia, C. Bascombrio, R. Ruiz, S. Baylon, M. Salazar, P. Hinostroza (R. Silva), J. Bazalar, J. Jayo, A. Yanez (J. Saavedra), M. Asprilla, D. Chevez (C. Pizarro).
**2-2 on agg. Penarol won 3-1 on pens*

INTERTHE NATION'SFAVOURITE

THE NATION'S FAVOURITE STORE FOR OFFICIAL WORLD CUP REPLICAS 0800 7832016

WHATEVER YOU'RE INTO
INTERSPORT®

World Service

April 29 - Cali (Col)
America (Col) 1 (Tellez 48)
Cerro Porteno (Par) 2 (Gomez 69, Paredes 82)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** H. Elizondo (Arg).
America: D. Gomez, j. Cardona, J. Tierradentro, W. Ortegon (J. Caicedo 46, sent off 65), F. Mazziri, N. Villarreal, r. Gacha, G. Gonzalez, F. Oviedo (J. Angulo 46), R. Perez (J. Tellez 46), L. Moreno.
C. Porteno: A. Bobadilla, L. Monges, H. Blanco, Cristaldo, P. Da Silva, D. Gavilan, R. Gomez, H.Da Silva, H. Ovelar (M. Dominguez 75), F. Caballero (J. Paredes 57), E. Fernandez (H. Ovelar 85).
*Cerro Poerteno won 3-1 on aggregate.

April 30 - Santiago (Chile)
Colo Colo (Chi) 2 (Rojas 49, Emerson 52)
Barcelona (Ecu) 2 (Delgado 45, 55)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 30,000.
Colo Colo: C. Arbizu, Mario Salas, (W. Contreras 46), D. Henriquez, J. Gonzalez (F.Ferrero 86), F. Rojas, E. Pereira, M. Espina, J. Sierra, A. Neira, F. Vergara, (R. Zambrano).
Barcelona: J. Cevallos, J. Montanero, R Noriega, H. Quinonez, L. Gomez, L. Capurro, H. Carabali, M. Morales, W. Ayres, J. Romero, A. Delgado.
**Barcelona won 4-3 on agg*

April 30 - Asuncion (Par)
Olimpia (Par) 1 (Monzon 70)
Colon Santa Fe (Arg) 0
HT: 0-0.
Olimpia. R. Tavarelli, J. Valdez, D. Caniza, N. Zelaya, S. Suarez, A. Jara Heyun (F. Torres 57), c. Paredes, L. Monzon, W. Avalos, M. Caballero, G. Gonzalez.
Colon: J. Burtovoy, R. Aquino, P. Morant, H. Rodriguez Pena (sent off 72), D. Unali, C. Marini, R. Castagno Suarez, M. Saralegui, E. Fuertes, G. Sandoval, N. Agoglia.
**3-3 on agg. Colon won 2-1 on pens*

May 7 - Buenos Aires (Arg)
River Plate (Arg) 1 (Solari 49)
America (Mex) 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** M. Rezende (Braz).
River Plate: G. Burgos, H. Diaz, C. Ayala (P. Saravia 87), E. Berrizzo, J. Sorin, M. Escudero (S. Netto 85), L. Astrada, S. Solari, P. Aimar, S. Rambert (sent off 57), M. Salas.
America: H. Pineda, R. Gutierrez, J. Salgado, I. Hierro, M. Yakuta, S. Mercado, S. Lara (sent off 84), N. Astivia, G. Cedres, A. Mohamed, C. Torres (S. Zarate 58).
**River Plate won 2-1 on agg*

ARGENTINA

Midweek April 14-16

River Plate 1 (Aimar 48)
Platense 1 (Chatruc 3)

Lanus 2 (J. Serrizuela 54, Siviero 75)
Boca Juniors 1 (Latorre 37)

Rosario Centra 1 (Rivarola 13)
Union Santa Fe 1 (Cabrol pen 31)

Ferro Carril Oeste 1 (Sartori 235)
Gimnasia Y Tiro Salta 0

Deportivo Espanol 0
Racing Club 0

Independiente 3 (Guerrero 10, Calderon 35, Nunez 88)
San Lorenzo 1 (Lussenhoff 38)

Estudiantes De La Plata 1 (Turchi 85)
Argentinos Juniors 0

Huracan 0
Gimnasia Y Esgrima De La Plata 1 (Sava 26)

Gimnasia Y Esgrima Jujuy 0
Velez Sarsfield 2 (Bassedas 13, Chilavert 28)

Colon Santa Fe 2 (Sandoval 70, 90)
Newell's Old Boys 3 (Lujambio 48, Quintana 53, 80)

Week ending April 19

Estudiantes De La Plata 2 (Ramos 49, 90 pen)
Independiente 0

Boca Junios 1 (Latorre 11)
Rosario Central 1 (Bustos Montoya 58)

Newell's Old Boys 0
River Plate 0

San Lorenzo 3 (Acosta 30, Franco 35, Esteves 77)
Gimnasia Y Esgrima Jujuy 1 (Lobe 88)

Velez Sarsfield 6 (Chilavert 31, Posse 50, 53, Dominguez 83, Cordone 88, D. Husain 45)
Colon Santa Fe 1 (Saralegui 12)

Platense 1 (Godoy 90)
Lanus 1 (Clotet 73)

Gimnasia Y Tiro Salta 4 (Maciel pen 32, Bonet 59, Castilla 78, Guibergis 84)
Deportivo Espanol 1 (Carrario 15)

Union Santa Fe 2 (Castillo 49, Silva 74)
Ferro Carril Oeste 3 (Sartori 52, V. Lopez 55 pen, Bustos 69 pen)

Racing Club 0
Huracan 0

Argentinos Juniors 1 (Arcamone 87)
Gimnasia Y Esgrima De La Plata 2 (Sosa 46, Messera 48)

Week ending April 26

Colona Santa Fe 2 (Aquino 38, Torres 83)
San Lorenzo 0

Gimnasia Y Esgrima Jujuy 1 (Lobo 77)
Estudiantes De La Plata 0

Independiente 0
Argentinos Juniors 2 (Scotto 65, Grafagnoli 69)

Huracan 2 (Biscay 23 pen, Montenegro 81)
Gimnasia Y Tiro Salta 0

Gimnasia Y Esgrima De La Plata 2
(Guglielminpietro 44, Galvan Og 78)
Racing Club 1 (Estevez 53)

River Plate 1 (Aimar 16)
Velez Sarsfield 1 (Sarabia og 53)

Rosario Central 2 (Cuberas 8, Bustos Montoya 14)
Platense 0

Ferro Carril Oeste 4 (Buso 36, 49, 85, Yaque 54)
Boca Juniors 1 (Palermo 28)

Deportivo Espanol 1 (Odriozola pen 60)
Union Santa Fe 0

Lanus 3 (Knet 15, Belloso 31, Siviero 56)
Newell's Old Boys 1 (Quintana 7)

Week ending May 3

Argentinos Juniors 2 (Brizuela 32, 81)
Racing Club 0

Velez Sarsfield 2 (Chilavert pen 50, Posse 82)
Lanus 2 (Knet 24, J. Serrizuela pen 56)

Newell's Old Boys 0
Rosario Central 0

Platense 2 (Sponton 8, 56)
Ferro Carril Oeste 2 (V. Lopez 17, Yaque 90)

Boca Juniors 1 (Caniggia 68, Solano pen 72)
Deportivo Espanol 3 (Galvan 41, Parodi 44, 48)

San Lorenzo 0
River Plate 0

Estudiantes De La Plata 0
Colon Santa Fe 2 (Castillo 48, Gordillo 53)

Independiente 1 (G. Gomez 23)
Gimnasia Y Esgrima Jujuy 1 (Morales Santos 67)

Union Santa Fe 1 (Donnet 2)
Huracan 1 (Barijho 47)

Gimnasia Y Tiro Salta 1 (Maciel 57)
Gimnasia Y Esgrima De La Plata 3
(Guglielminpietro 43, 78, San Esteban pen 80)

ARGENTINA

National A Division closing championship

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Velez Sarsfield	14	9	4	1	28	10	31
Gim y Esgrima La Plata	14	9	4	1	31	17	31
Lanus	14	8	5	1	30	14	29
Gim y Esgrima Jujuy	14	6	4	4	16	15	22
River Plate	14	5	6	3	25	19	21
San Lorenzo	14	6	3	5	28	19	21
Rosario Central	14	5	6	3	18	17	21
Argentinos Jnrs	14	5	5	4	21	13	20
Ferro carril Oeste	14	5	5	4	27	26	20
Newell's Old Boys	14	5	4	5	20	19	19
Independiente	14	5	4	5	18	20	19
Estudiantes La Plata	14	5	2	7	11	19	17
Platense	14	3	7	4	16	16	16
Boca Juniors	14	4	4	6	24	26	16
Racing Club	14	4	3	7	11	13	15
Colon Santa Fe	14	3	6	5	19	26	15
Deportivo Espanol	14	2	6	6	17	33	12
Huracan	14	2	5	7	12	23	11
Gimnasia y Tiro Salta	14	2	4	8	13	26	10
Union Santa Fe	14	1	5	8	16	27	8

BRAZIL

Rio championship – 3rd round

After 3 games: Vasco da Gama 9pts, Bangu 8, Flamengo, Madureira 5, Fluminense 4, Fribugense 3, Botafogo 2, Americano 1.

BOLIVIA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
The Strongest	10	5	3	1	18	9	18
Guabira	10	5	3	2	13	10	18
Wilsterman	9	6	3	0	15	5	15
San Jose	10	4	3	3	15	14	15
Blooming	10	4	2	4	16	15	14
Oriente Petrolero	9	4	2	3	11	12	14
Bolivar	8	4	1	3	12	11	13
Ind. Petrolero	10	3	3	4	12	11	12
Destroyers	9	2	4	3	11	12	10
Real Santa Cruz	9	1	4	4	10	13	7
Chaco Petrolero	9	2	0	7	11	21	6
Real Potosi	9	1	2	6	10	20	5

CHILE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Concepcion	5	4	0	1	11	5	12
Rangers Tacna	5	4	0	1	10	6	12
Colo Colo	5	3	2	0	10	2	11
Huachipato	5	3	1	12	5	3	10
Palestino	5	2	2	1	11	3	8
Univ. Catolica	5	2	2	1	11	7	8
Univ. de Chile	5	2	2	1	7	5	8
Audax Italiano	5	2	1	2	8	6	7
Coquimbo Unido	5	2	1	2	5	6	7
Puerto Montt	5	2	1	2	5	7	7
Cobreloa	5	2	1	2	9	7	7
La Serena	5	2	1	2	8	7	7
Osorno	5	0	2	3	5	10	2
Wanderers	5	0	2	3	5	13	2
Temuco	5	0	2	3	4	16	2
Iquique	5	0	0	5	6	17	0

COLOMBIA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Nacional	16	8	6	2	31	15	35
Deportivo Cali	16	10	3	3	37	22	34
Caldas	16	8	6	2	29	13	30
Huila	16	7	3	6	24	19	26
Ind. Santa Fe	16	6	6	4	22	18	26
Tolima	16	6	4	6	14	13	26
At. Junior	16	6	6	4	21	24	26
America	16	4	6	6	21	16	24
Ind. Medellin	16	4	8	4	21	16	24
Envigado	16	6	4	6	22	21	23
Millonarios	16	3	9	4	19	21	22
Quindio	16	4	6	6	17	23	21
Bucaramanga	16	5	4	7	17	27	20
Union Magdalena	16	3	6	7	15	25	20
Cortulua	16	3	7	6	12	22	18
Unicosta	16	3	0	13	13	41	9

ECUADOR

	P	W	D	L	D	A	Pts
Cuenca	10	6	2	2	10	5	20
Aucas	10	4	4	2	15	10	19
Emelec	9	5	2	2	21	10	18
Liga Univ. Quito	10	5	2	3	22	17	18
Barcelona	7	4	2	1	17	5	16
Espli	10	5	0	5	15	19	15
Nacional	8	4	1	3	18	13	14
Olmedo	10	3	3	4	9	13	13
Delfin	10	3	3	4	14	17	13
Deportivo Quito	8	1	4	3	11	15	8
Panama	9	1	2	6	7	21	7
Tecnico Universitario	9	0	3	6	6	20	4

PERU

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Sport Boys	13	8	2	3	24	10	26
Universitario	13	6	6	1	23	10	24
Union Minas	13	7	3	3	23	29	24
Sporting Cristal	13	6	5	2	25	14	23
Deportivo Pesquero	13	6	3	4	23	19	21
Alianza Lima	13	4	6	3	24	15	18
Aurich	13	4	4	5	13	14	16
Alianza Atletica	13	4	4	5	18	20	16
Cienciano	13	4	3	6	15	18	15
Melgar	13	4	1	8	12	24	13
Municipal	13	3	2	8	14	33	11
Lawn Tennis	13	2	1	10	9	29	7

URUGUAY

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Nacional	7	5	0	2	19	10	15
Penarol	7	5	0	2	11	6	15
Bella Vista	7	3	3	1	5	4	12
Defensor	7	3	2	2	10	8	11
Rampla Juniors	6	2	3	1	7	6	9
Danubio	7	3	0	4	11	15	9
Liverpool	7	2	2	3	6	10	8
Rentistas	7	1	5	1	4	5	8
River Plate	6	2	1	3	10	12	7
Wanderers	7	1	3	3	11	12	6
Huracan Buceo	7	1	3	3	6	9	6
Villa Espanola	7	1	2	4	4	7	5

AFRICA

1999 AFRICAN UNDER-20 CHAMPIONSHIP

Preliminary round:

Mozambique 4 Reunion 4
Reunion 1 Mozambique 2
Mozambqiue won 6-5 on agg

Rwanda v Chad postponed

Sierra Leone 4 Liberia 3
Liberia 2 Sierra Leone 2
Sierra Leone won 6-5 on agg

Mauritania withdrew v Libya walkover

Lesotho 2 Swaziland 1
Swaziland 1 Lesotho 1
Lesotho won 3-2 on agg

Namibia withdrew v Malawi walkover

Burkina Faso walkover v Gambia withdrew

Congo 2 Togo 1
Togo 1 Congo 1
Congo won 3-2 on agg

First round:

Mauritania v Tunisia
Sierra Leone v Mali
Gabon v Angola
Congo v Cote d'Ivoire
Uganda v Tanzania
Burkina Faso v Nigeria
Ethiopia v Egypt
Lesotho v Zambia
Rwanda or Chad v Cameroon
Burundi v Sudan
Algeria v Guinea
Senegal v Morocco
Malawi v Botswana
Mozambique v South Africa

Victor Chandler International

EXCLUSIVE TAX FREE BETTING SERVICE

Established for over 50 years, London's leading credit bookmaker is now able to provide high staking clients with an exclusive and personal tax free betting service.

To open an account, please telephone

+350 79756

(between 09.00 - 22.00 C.E.T.)

Victor Chandler offers the widest range of betting on all international sporting and horse racing events. All transactions are treated with the utmost discretion and confidentiality by a professional and highly trained staff. Call today and discover how to avail yourself of this exclusive and unique service.

Suite 1b, First Floor, Leanse Place, 50 Town Range, GIBRALTAR

Tel: +350 79756 Fax: +350 79757

www.victorchandler.com

Subject to legal legislation.

Not available to the UK market - Clients must be aged 18 years or over.

Established in London for over 50 years

MASTERSOUND MAIL ORDER

P.O. BOX 183, SOUTHPORT PR8 4GE, U.K.

❖❖ *VINTAGE Videos (VHS on European PAL System)* ❖❖

1) THE WORLD CUP 1954 (84 mins) The Final 16 teams in Switzerland (Inc HUNGARY) £9
2) HOME INTERNATIONAL 1967 (48 mins) ENGLAND 2 v SCOTLAND 3 £9
3) WORLD INTERNATIONAL 1963 (92 mins) ENGLAND 2 v REST OF THE WORLD 1 £12
4) WORLD CUP FINAL 1966 (104 mins) ENGLAND 4 v WEST GERMANY 2 £12
5) EUROPEAN CUP FINAL 1968 (118 mins) MAN UTD 4 v BENFICA 1 £12
6) EUROPEAN CUP FINAL 1960 (100 mins) REAL MADRID 7 v EINTRACHT 3 £15
7) F.A. CUP FINAL 1963 (107 mins) MAN UTD 3 v LEICESTER 1 £15
8) WORLD CUP QUARTERS 1966 (100 mins) NORTH KOREA 3 v PORTUGAL 5 £15
9) EUROPEAN CUP FINAL 1967 (98 mins) CELTIC 2 v INTER MILAN 1 £15
10) HOME INTERNATIONAL 1969 (106 mins) ENGLAND 4 v SCOTLAND 1 £15
11) WEMBLEY INTERNATIONAL 1953 (88 mins) ENGLAND 3 v HUNGARY 6 £15

Video 12) *"SHANKS FOR THE MEMORY"* John Keith's comic Shankly tales from Anfield £9

AUDIO TAPES of SHANKY/DIXIE DEAN
BOOKS on PUSKAS/CLOUGH/SHANKLY & many more
Hardbacks/Softbacks by ROBSON BOOKS Prices on request

PRICES include U.K. Postage
For Postage ABROAD Add £1.50 Per Item

Telephone : **01704-567077** (No V.A.T.)
for Mail Order World Wide Mastercard/Visa
cheques/P.O.s to "MASTERSOUND" *Guaranteed Quality since 1969*

METROPOLIS CLOTHING CO.

DESIGNER LABELS DIRECT TO YOUR DOOR AT BELOW HIGH STREET PRICES.
MANY LINES UNAVAILABLE ELSEWHERE. NEXT DAY DELIVERY SERVICE.

TOMMY HILFIGER • RALPH LAUREN • ARMANI • D&G • MOSCHINO
CALVIN KLEIN • STONE ISLAND • VALENTINO • LACOSTE • DKNY

VISIT OUR WEBSITE http://www.metropolis-clothing.com
FOR A FREE COLOUR BROCHURE CONTACT:
P.O. BOX 99, NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE, NE6 1YN.
TELEPHONE: 0191 240 1637 (24 HOURS)

The Jewel in World Footballs Crown

in celebration of 40 years of world cup history 1930-1970

LIMITED EDITION

a full life size replica of the JULES RIMET TROPHY

yes - its really true,
for more exciting information plus colour brochure please write to:
Beaumont Replicas, P.O. Box 6774
Birmingham B5 7NL England
Tel: 0121 446 5705
for the serious fan, a serious trophy

LA-VANITA SINGAPORE

For you favourite Italian English Premier League & other world class team replica Jerseys and souvenirs (including World Cup 98) visit

3 Coleman St 02/36m Peninsula Shopping Centre, Singapore 179804

Tel: 065 3340639 Fax: 065 3380331

Mail order and wholesale inquiries welcome

WORLD CUP TICKETS

France '98
June 10 - July 12

★ ALL GAMES ★ ALL CITIES ★

Buy & Sell

www.soccertickets.com

Western States Ticket Service
143 W. McDowell Rd. • Phoenix, AZ 85003 USA
(602) 254-3300 USA
FAX (602) 254-3387 USA

SOCCER CONTAX

NEW! NEW! NEW!

Designed to keep YOU in touch
** Exciting Interactive Concept*
** Worldwide Coverage*
** Low Subscription Rates*
Send now for YOUR free Pilot Issue
Soccer Contax
101 Boundary Road
St John's Wood
London, NW8 0RG
or Telephone John Eastwood on
0171-625 1191

Commission a unique Photo-realistic painting of any footballer from the history of the game.
A4 action study (30cm21cm) £39
A3 action study (42cm30cm) £59
A3 3 player study (this is a triple study of one player OR choose any three footballers to appear in the same painting) £99

ALL PRICES INCLUDE p+p
Cheques payable to DIRK BUSHBY
send all orders and details to:
Dirk Bushby, 28 George Street
Belper, Derbyshire, DE56 1DL

Send large S.a.e. to receive exclusive colour catalogue.

PHOTO I.D.

Phoney photo I.D. cards for novelty purposes only are now available and we've got 19 different designs for you to choose from. Join the "world famous Actors Guild", or even the Mile High Club, become a bodyguard, there's loads more.

PROFESSIONAL QUALITY AND DESIGNS. TAMPERPROOF, LAMINATED FINISH. CREDIT CARD SIZE.

www.belvine.co.uk

FOR A FREE CATALOGUE SEND S.A.E. TO:
BELVINE (DEPT WS)
P.O. BOX 180
STANMORE, MIDDX. HA7 2AZ

All items are sold as novelties and misuse may be illegal

UNIQUE ON VIDEO TAPE

700 SOCCER MATCHES

■ *AJAX* ■ *DUTCH TEAM* ■ *FEYENOORD* ■ *PSV*

Now you can enjoy old soccer matches on video tape. Full matches cost *£11*. Highlights (180 min.) *£12* and extended tapes of 240 min. *£14*.
A catalogue with overviews of 700 soccer tapes (VHS-PAL) is obtainable free on the internet at:
http://www.worldaccess.nl/-soccer

DUTCH SOCCER OFFICE
POB 92, 1270-AB HUIZEN, NETHERLANDS.

BRAZIL DIRECT

Genuine Brazilian Club Shirts
High Quality
Home/Away Shirts
Flamengo/Santos/St Paulo/
Vasco and many more.
For details please fax
name and address on

00 55 11889 7778

WHO'S WHO OF SOUTH AMERICAN FOOTBALL

Full details of all current South American and Mexican International Players (over 500). Includes birthdate, birthplace, career history (past clubs/years), caps + more. £7 inc. postage.
M. Parr, 62 Orford Street, Porthill, Newcastle-Under-Lyme, Staffs. ST5 0AQ, England.

100,000 FOOTBALL CARDS STOCKED 1900-1997. Mainly British clubs. Prices from 20p. Send two first-class stamps for catalogue. Card collections bought. MATCHDAY, PO BOX 8, BRIGG, N.LINCS, DN20 8EN

BRITISH & OVERSEAS Football shirts from 1971-98. For your free list contact: FOOTBALL-NOT MUGGYBONEHEAD, 41 Shaftesbury Road, Carshalton, SM5 1HH. Tel/Fax: 0181-241-3128.

GOAL/FOURFOURTWO COMPLETE Collections. Offers? Steve 0181 3039326.

HATS, SCARVES, BADGES, PENNANTS, FLAGS etc...

Large selection of European & World, National & Club Teams

For lists please send large S.A.E. (Overseas I.R.C) to:-

PREMIER FOOTBALL CENTRE (W.S.)
10 Haddon Road, Heald Greeen, Cheadle, Cheshire, SK8 3HN, England

---

subside SPORTS

32 Team Line-up

• Full World Cup 98 range catalogue available

Official Names & Nos available on all shirts

subside sports, P.O.Box 335, Exeter, Devon EX4 7YS, England.
Freephone UK: **0800 018 9888**
International: **(44) 1647 433272**
Fax: **01647 433114** • email: **sales@subside.co.uk**

www.subside.co.uk

FOR SALE

SALE. OFFICIAL SHIRTS: of all World Cup teams and also of Italian teams (really good price). Write for free list:Walkon di Iacazzi Andrea, C.P. 95 20010 Cornaredo Italy. Fax: 0039 2 4814491.

THE NEW ROMANIAN Football Yearbook, European Cup books all the line-ups, video tapes and Romanian statistical books. Available from Romeo Ionescu, str Razboieni, nr9, 2000 Ploesti, Romania.

WORLD SOCCER JANUARY 1978 to October 1992 complete. Offers. Hardy 01946 693295.

WANTED

I WANT ORIGINAL WORLD CUP POSTERS from 1930-1998.Please contact Jim Halle, P.O.Box 167, Stevenson, Maryland 21153 USA. Tel. 0101 410 486 3090.

LATEST HUNGARIAN INTERNATIONAL and any recent Hungarian Club Jerseys. New or as new. Tel. Aled on 01994 230897.

PELE ITEMS WANTED photos, cards, books etc. S.Bolton, 10 Woodheys, Heaton Mersey, Stockport, SK4 3BJ.

MEMORABILIA

FOOTBALL BOOKS AND ANNUALS
From 1940's to 1990's
Send first class stamp for latest list of hundreds of items to the specialist dealer –
STEVE KIRBY
Football Books and Memorabilia.
Dept WS, Pentire, Woodhill Road, Collingham, Newark, Notts NG23 7NR
Tel: 01636 893108

PROGRAMMES

MR. PROGRAMMES
(D.C. & A. YOUNG)
Programmes - 1940's onwards including: Specials, Internationals, Ex-League etc., also Sports Photographs, Autographs.
Send SAE for latest catalogue
Collections purchased.
8 Birkdale Mount, Leeds LS17 7SS
Tel: 0113 2694537

THOUSANDS OF PROGRAMMES
and football cards for sale
Send name and address for full catalogue to Andy Fuller, 32 Cumberland Street, Woodbridge, Suffolk IP12 4AD

SPORTS PROGRAMMES
The Poplars, Mill Street, Gamlingay, nr Sandy, Beds. SG19 3JS. Tel: 01767 651539
BRITAIN'S LARGEST ANTIQUE FOOTBALL PROGRAMME DEALER
Collectors send 60p postage for free 66 page new football catalogue
POSITIVELY THE HIGHEST PRICES PAID FOR ALL COLLECTIONS
Proprietor: ROY CALMELS

PROGRAMME PROMOTIONS
Send 50p in postage stamps for a copy of our monthly 60 page
Football Programme Catalogue,
listing thousands of programmes for sale from pre-war to this season's issues. Old programme collections always wanted.
Programme Promotions
47 The Beeches, Lampton Road, Hounslow, Middlesex, TW3 4EH
Tel: 0181 569 5131

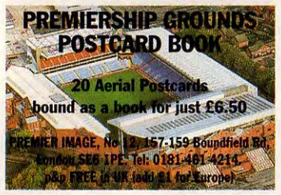
PROGRAMMES

FREE
To receive a £5 pack of programmes ***FREE*** plus our catalogue send £1 in unused stamps (for postage) to:
Steve Earl Football Programmes (WS)
Broad Street, Bungay, Suffolk NR35 1AH
For catalogue only just send name and address, or phone 01986 892621 or www.football-prog.co.uk

FOOTBALL PROGRAMME CATALOGUE, 1960/61 to 1996/97 at the cheapest prices anywhere. No SAE required. Send name and address to: Lock, Stock and Barrel, 12 Twyford Close, Widnes, Cheshire WA8 9RN.Tel: 0151 420 8328

COMPREHENSIVE RANGE OF PROGRAMMES INCLUDING A GOOD SELECTION OF EUROPEAN
We are always interested in purchasing collectors especially older items.
Please send 50p for our latest catalogue to:
KATH and PETE,
Rundo Football Programmes, 4 Crawford Avenue, Gauldry, Newport-On-Tay, DD6 8SG. Tel: 01382 330356

SOUVENIRS



ENAMEL BADGES, Scottish, Irish, UK, worldwide selection for sale. Send for FREE illustrated catalogue. T. R. Smith, 48 Greyfriars Street, Glasgow, Scotland G32 6RF. Tel: 0141 7783409.

VIDEOS

FOOTBALL VIDEOS
MARADONA, RONALDO, PELE, VAN BASTEN, ZICO, ROMARIO, BAGGIO, CRUYFF, PLATINI, BEST, BATISTUTA, WEAH, BARESI, BECKENBAUR, MALDINI, SUKER, RAUL, ZIANNE, DEL PIERO, PAPIN, MANCINI, GARRINCHA, SIMONE, ROSSI, CARECA, ZOLA, LEONARDO, CANIGGA, DENILSON, BRAZIL, HOLLAND, BOCA JUNIORS, NAPOLI, AJAX, JUVENTUS, LIVERPOOL, BAYERN MUNICH, MILAN, BARCELONA, REAL MADRID, EUROPE, WORLD CUPS etc...
Quality and immediate delivery guaranteed – cheap prices.
Phone/write for FREE extensive catalogue (no sae needed
Colin Humphreys, 1 The Close, Walton Park, Liverpool 9 1EX. Tel: (0151) 524 2077

VIDEOS OF AFRICAN , South American and European Soccer 1970-1998. Full games and highlights. Club Competitions and National Team Competitions, specialising in Brazilian Soccer. Eivind.Kaasa, Gamlegrensa 10 B, Skien in Telemark, Norway. Tel: 00 47 91 68 52 81, Fax: 00 47 35 95 15 25.

VIDEOS OF EUROPEAN and South American soccer 1970-1998. Sam McCosh, 138 Raceview Road, Ballymena, Northern Ireland.

WORLD AND EUROPEAN Soccer Videos. World Cup Finals '94, European Competitions, EURO 96 : £7 each. Write to: G. Burgon, 508 Thornton Road, Thornton, Bradford, West Yorkshire BD13 3JD. Or Tel: 01274 834923.

MISCELLANEOUS

SOCCER COACH
★ *USA* ★
This book explains how to get a lucrative, expenses paid trip to the States (and also the Caribbean and Australia) to coach childrens soccer. There are hundreds of jobs available to people of all ages and abilities. "Soccer Coach USA" includes chapters on soccer coaching companies, soccer camps and freelance work, detailing over 50 employers. "Soccer Coach USA" is the original and the most comprehensive guide to coaching in America, and is essential reading if you don't want to miss out on a great experience! (Beware of imitations).
Only £9.95 inc. p&p *(overseas add £2)*
Please make cheques/PO's payable to "Delta Publications" Dept WS, 8 Douglas Gs, Durham DH1 3PT

MISCELLANEOUS

V.I.P. TURF ACCOUNTANT
01954 251340
276 High Street, (Freepost) Cottenham, Cambridge CB4 4BR
www.betvip.co.uk vince@betvip.co.uk
WORLD CUP – FRANCE – 1998

3 BRAZIL	11 ARGENTINA	33 DENMARK	80 AUSTRIA
9 ENGLAND	14 SPAIN	50 BELGIUM	80 PARAGUAY
7 FRANCE	18 YUGOSLAVIA	50 BULGARIA	80 MEXICO
7 GERMANY	25 ROMANIA	50 NORWAY	150 SCOTLAND
8 HOLLAND	25 NIGERIA	66 COLOMBIA	250 JAMAICA
8 ITALY	33 CROATIA		

E.W. 1/2 ODDS A PLACE **1st, 2nd.** PRICES @ 01/05/98 AND SUBJECT TO
★ ★ ALL MAJOR CREDIT CARDS ACCEPTED ★ ★
YOU CAN BET ON
WHO WILL WIN THE CUP — WHO WILL WIN EACH GROUP
WHO WILL WIN EACH MATCH — THE SCORE ON EACH MATCH
1ST PLAYER TO SCORE EACH MATCH — LATER PLAYER TO SCORE
DOUBLE 1ST SCORE/CORRECT SCORE ON EACH MATCH

Please mention WORLD SOCCER when replying to advertisements

PUBLICATIONS

WHAT ELSE IS AS SOLID AS NIGERIA'S OLYMPIC SOCCER GOLD MEDAL?

Africa's No.1 English Language Monthly Football Magazine For African Football Fans And Lovers Of African Football World-Wide
SUBSCRIPTION ENQUIRIES:
WRITE: P.O. 11624, LONDON SE12 8ZF
PHONE: +44-181-463-9281
FAX: +44-181-318-3587
Now In Its 3rd Year - And Going Strong!

ASIAN FOOTBALL '97/'98
The ***"A-Z of Asian Football '97/'98"*** is a 148-page hardback reviewing the past season for 45 Asian nations. First and so far only annual on Asia. Full of colour photos.
Price £25
Send payment by cheque or cash and receive the full 48-page catalogue of statistical annuals, Panini albums, cards etc.
FORSINGDAL
8 Rue A Musset, L-2175 Luxembourg

THE 1998 AFRICAN CUP of NATIONS BURKINA FASO
The most definitive book on the 1998 African Cup of Nations is now available. Over 170 pages full of information on the tournament which includes: Information on every nation taking part, complete with full squad details. Match reports on every game, complete with full match statistics. Also included are full Player and Team statistics as well as all the tournament statistics such as: Shots on goal, Shots on target, corners and who took them and much more... **Price £11.99 (+£3 p&p UK). (+£5.00 p&p overseas).**
Cheques/Postal orders payable in sterling to: **R.MANOHAR,** Image Plus, 19 Winnock Road, West Drayton, Middlesex, England UB7 7RH. **Also still available: 1996 African Nations Cup and The 1996 Asian Cup** both books available £9.99 (+£3.00 p&p UK), (+£5.00 p&p overseas).

FOOTBALL KITS

ENAMEL BADGES, ENGLISH & FOREIGN FOOTBALL SHIRTS
EXTENSIVE RANGE OF FOOTBALL SOUVENIRS
For Badge lists etc SAE to: J C Sports, Riverside Shopping Centre, Pride Hill Centre, Shrewsbury, SY1 1PJ. Tel/Fax: 01743 365083.
Wholesale enquiries welcome.
http://www.soccerbox.com
john@jcsports.force9.net
Free postage on all football shirts.

PEN PALS

1000 PRETTY GIRLS from Holland, Great Britain, Scandinavia, Europe, Poland, Russia, N/S-America, the Phillipines, Asia and worldwide seek friendship, romance, marriage. Ask for our FREE colour photo brochure! Correspondance Club '70/WS, Box 8177, Rotterdam-3009, Holland.

WORLDWIDE CONTACTMAGAZINE "Penpals Relationship Marriage" publish ads free + serious. Send bio & photo Big exclusive Contactcatalogue with full addresses photos 40 DM inc p&p. PFSI, PO Box 3473/WS, D-52121 Kohlscheid,Germany

RECRUITMENT

ARE YOU HITTING YOUR GOALS?!
TRAINEE MANAGERS REQUIRED
Prestigious company in Central London seeks hard-working, honest and, above all, financially motivated people (23-30). Potentially very high remuneration with a view to management and profit-share.
CONTACT: PETER SQUIRE
0171 576 7020
No previous experience necessary

PLAY BY MAIL

Have you got the footballs to be a management legend?
Try the Play-By-Mail game that gives **RAW, REAL FOOTBALLING FUN.**
For a free start-up pack and one weeks free gaming, contact:
IT'S A FUNNY OLD GAME,
30 Tankerville Street, Hartlepool TS26 8EY
or **TEL: 01429 429537** any time
or E-Mail: **IAFOG123@aol.com**

PLAY BY MAIL

EUROPEAN FANTASY FOOTBALL SUPER LEAGUE SEASON 1998-9
Select teams from some of Europe's finest and follow their fortunes as you compete against the managers of the world!
Unlike Play by Mail competitions this is a game with a real difference based on real life match results. As you support your teams they will be scoring you points in League and European competitions.
It's the game to play next season, so don't get caught in the rush...!!
Take the Challenge, Play the game and stay onside for the chance of a cash prize!!
Visit our Website at:
http://www.users.globalnet.co.uk/~eurontsp
OR
Write for an entry form, enclosing a SAE to:
Euronet Sports Limited
PO Box 5160
Fleckney
Leicester
LE8 8ZU

LEAGUE SOCCER
JOIN NOW AND WE'LL SEND YOU £5 CREDIT TO GET YOU STARTED
THE ORIGINAL AND THE BEST
Join in the excitement of professional football with this award winning PBM. League Soccer's continually improving gameplay has ensured it's success and popularity throughout it's ten year reign at the top. It contains all the features you would expect from a top football PBM and many, many more. But why take our word for it, try it for yourself! Simply fill in the coupon below listing your six favourite teams from Britain or Europe and put our game to the test.
To join just return this coupon to: NECOM GAMES, 19 Mostyn Road, Hazel Grove, Stockport, SK7 5HL. Fax: 0161 483 0809; Phone: 0161 483 1500
Name ..... Address .....
..... Postcode .....
Fav Teams 1 ..... 2 ..... 3 .....
4 ..... 5 ..... 6 .....

THE EUROPEAN SUPER LEAGUE
Now you can manage any of 120 premier teams from all over Europe. Be the boss of Ath. Madrid, Benfica, Celtic, Lazio, Auxerre, Chelsea, PSV or any of the other top-class European giants.
NEW SEASONS STARTING NOW!
Send to Y&C GAMES, 5 TOWN LANE, LITTLE NESTON, SOUTH WIRRAL, L64 4DE
Tel: 0151 336 1412 or Fax: 0151 353 1848
PLEASE SEND ME FREE START-UP PACK. MY FAVOURITE TEAM FROM EACH COUNTRY IS
BELGIUM ..... ENGLAND ..... FRANCE .....
GERMANY ..... HOLLAND ..... ITALY .....
PORTUGAL ..... SCOTLAND ..... SPAIN .....
Preferred country (from above list) .....
Name ..... Address .....
..... Postcode ..... World Soccer 4/7/98

Free starter pack for all World Soccer readers! • Free starter pack for all World Soccer readers!
Extra Time
Join NOW and see why there are thousands of members in Extra Time!
Get in on the action!
* *Uncheatable transfer system.*
* *No mid-season boredom! TWO league matches EVERY turn makes promotion, play-offs and relegation battles come around twice as quickly.*
* *Win real-life engraved trophies and medals, personalised end of season certificates for every manager.*
* *Full automated email option (send and receive your turns over the internet).*
* *KJC Games, established 1981, a name you can trust. Founder member of the United Kingdom Postal Games Association.*

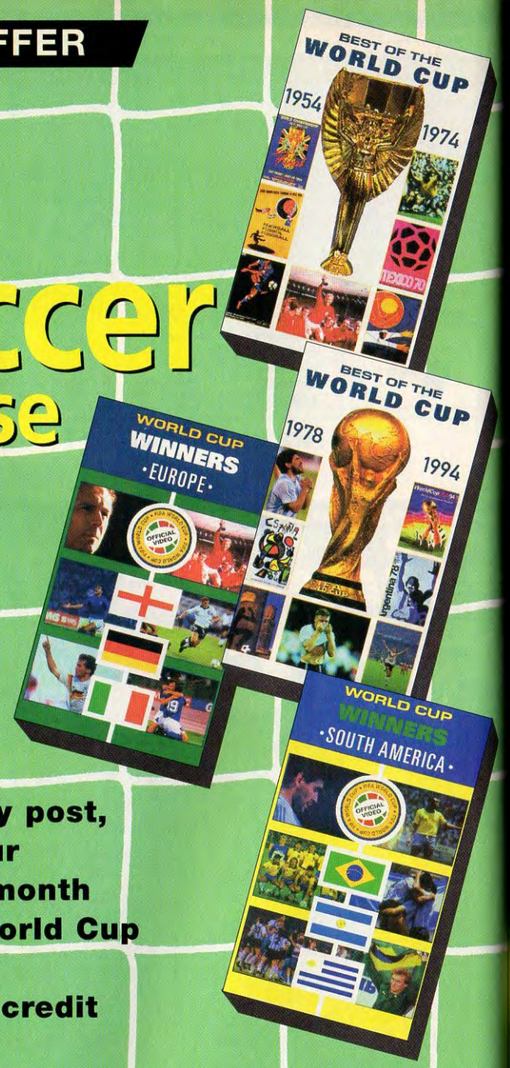
Football squads updated daily with real-life transfers.
Our turn fees may be the lowest of any professional Play By Mail game but we don't sacrifice quality to achieve this. In fact, companies with old games are copying our features and adding them into their own games.
Send now for your Free No obligation starter pack. Don't send money, this offer costs you nothing!
compare our game compare our prices!
FREE fone 0800 783 77 22 (lines open 24 hours)
(we pay for your phone call - be ready with six fav teams and post-code)
or return coupon to: KJC Games, **FREEPOST**, Thornton-Cleveleys, Lancs. FY5 3BR
Name _____ Tel number _____ (optional)
Address _____ My six favourite teams are _____
Postcode _____
Fax: 01253 869960 *email: Football@KJCGames.com *web site http://www.KJCGames.com

EINNEK FOOTBALL PLAY BY MAIL
The professional PBM, run for the gamer's enjoyment, not for the GM's convenience. With 16 years experience and your GM available on the phone 12 hours a day. Einnek is the PBM you can trust! Features include: 7 pages + laser printed turns, weekly internationals, 5 active transfer markets, tactics, name your own team and players (NO real names), attacking defending and top scorers tables, unlimited news and rumours, message section, full info on every match played (not just your own), discipline, wage negotiation, full ageing system, sponsorship, REAL TROPHIES, annual convention, fanzines and all the other trimmings of a quality PBM. 2 turns per month at only £1.95 per game. For FREE start-up and one FREE turn, write to: PBM YOUNG (WS), 31 Nare Road, Aveley, Essex RM15 4RB (or phone Kennie on 01708 862055)

pure fantasy football
M&E SPORTS
free no obligation offer
Phone 01246 241129
What do you want from a fantasy football game?
Do you want a challenge?
Our advanced game system makes our competitors products look like games for beginners. Our product is for people who want a game they can get their teeth into.
Do you want to deal with a quality company?
We are the founding member of the United Kingdom Postal Games Association which assures both service and quality. We too could produce a list of quotes from our customers but we don't have to back our game up as 15,000 members speaks for itself.
Do you want value for money?
Some games advertise that they are cheap, but are they when you consider value for money rather than the basic price.
Do you want incentives?
We offer two unbeatable discount structures and regular competitions and offers in our newsletter.
Do you want regular new features?
Our software is regularly enhanced and up dated. We also listen to what YOU want.
Do you want a choice of teams?
The Pure Fantasy Football world is made up of 216 teams from the UK and Europe, along with their real life squads. Plenty of choice for any football nut. Bear that in mind when you fill in the coupon below.
But most of all if you want a realistic innovative game designed by football fanatics, for football fanatics, that concentrates on FOOTBALL (not how many meat pies you sell!), you have found it in fact, football is all we do! Football, football, football . . . how else could we be the clear market leader and the industry innovator.
Want to find out more? It costs the price of stamp! Fill in the coupon below and we will then send you a totally free start-up pack and your first turn, with no obligation to continue. You can look at the product and instructions and decide for yourself.
M&E Sports
Po Box 186
Staveley
Chesterfield
S43 3UW
Fax 01246 241495
Name _____ Tel _____
Address _____
_____ Post Code _____ Age _____
PLEASE SEND ME MY FREE NO OBLIGATION START-UP PACK
My favourite teams are: (7 or more) _____
Teams subject to availability. If my favourite teams are not available I would like a team from (tick boxes)
England ❑ Scotland ❑ Europe (list) ❑
Web Site http://www.purefantasyfootball.com W.S. JULY

INTRODUCTORY SUBSCRIPTION OFFER

Subscribe to World Soccer and score with these free videos!



If you've never received World Soccer by post, now is the perfect time - not only is your guaranteed copy delivered FREE every month but you can now choose one of these World Cup videos absolutely free!
Simply complete the coupon or call the credit card hotline NOW.

FREE WORLD CUP VIDEO WHEN YOU SUBSCRIBE

YES! I would like to subscribe to World Soccer for:

☐ 2 years (24 issues) at £51.80 (saving 10% on the full rate of £57.60) and receive my free video. *(Please tick one choice below)*

☐ 1 year (12 issues) at £28.80 and receive my free video. *(Please tick one choice below)*

This chronicles the story of the few elite European teams to win the World Cup, rekindling great memories of national heroes such as Beckenbauer, Charlton and Rossi.
☐ **24E**

This brings to life the greatest goals and stories from six tournaments, featuring exclusive never seen before footage. Perfect for those wanting a dose of nostalgia.
☐ **23N**

This shows all the matches, goals, players and victories from the three South American teams to win the World Cup - Brazil, Argentina and Uruguay.
☐ **23M**

This features unforgettable incidents, skills and upsets from the last five World Cup tournaments, including spectacular action from the superstars such as Platini, Lineker and Romario.
☐ **23P**

FOR A FASTER ORDER CALL OUR CREDIT CARD HOTLINE
01622 778778
7 days a week 9am - 9pm quoting chosen video code above (one only)

Complete and return this coupon with your payment to:
World Soccer Subscriptions, FREEPOST CY1061, Haywards Heath, West Sussex RH16 3ZA.
(No stamp necessary if posted in the UK)

MY DETAILS

Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms: _____

Address: _____

_____

Postcode: _____

Daytime tel. No: _____
(in case we have a query with your order)

I enclose a cheque for £ _____ made payable to IPC Magazines Ltd.

Or please debit my: ☐ Mastercard ☐ Visa ☐ Amex Card

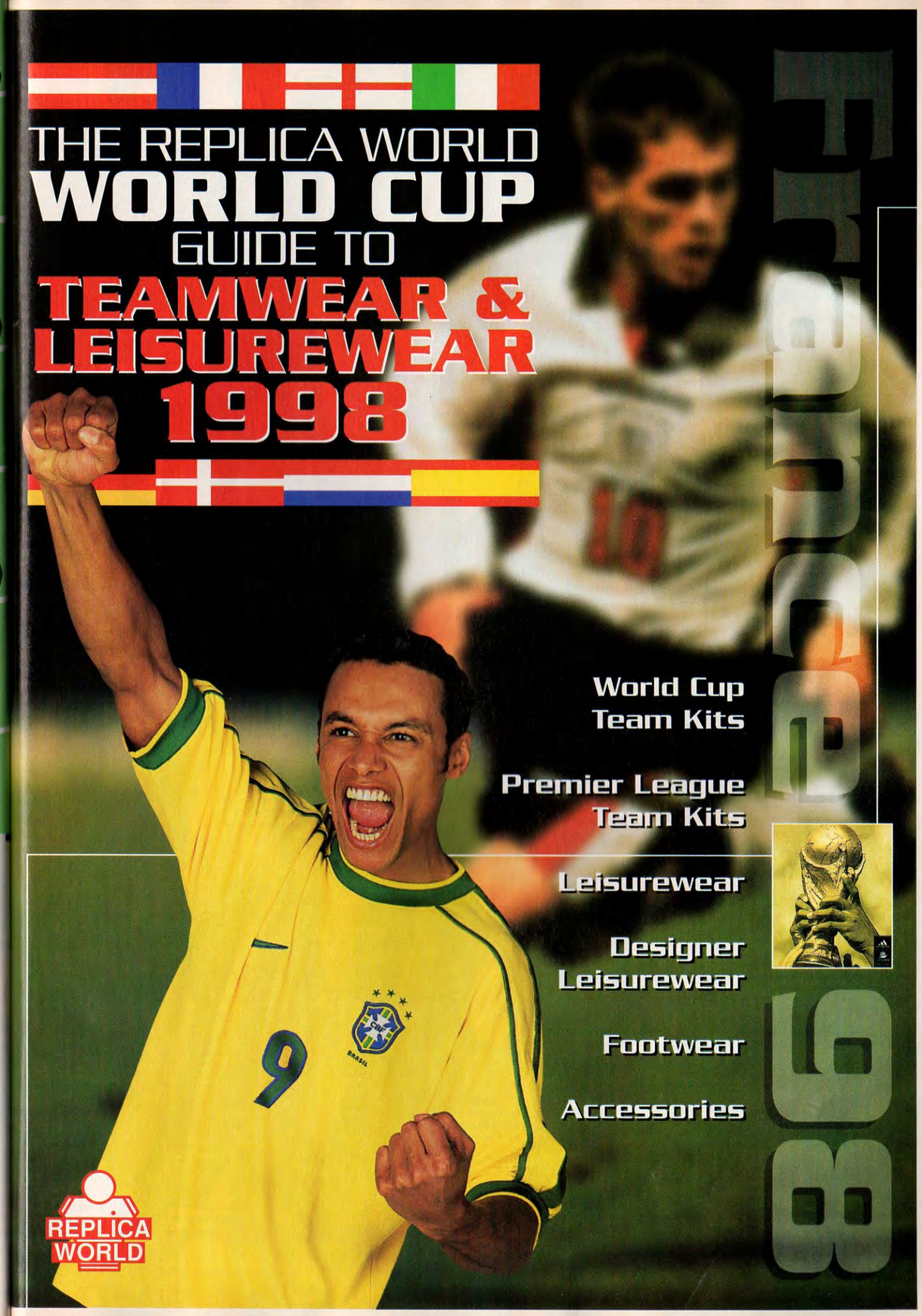
No. ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

Expiry Date: _____

Signature: _____ (I am over 18)

The closing date for this offer is 31st August 1998. Please allow up to 6 weeks for delivery of your first subscription issue. Offer open to new UK subscribers only. Your videos will arrive separately. Please allow 28 days for delivery. For enquiries and standard overseas rates, call 01444 445555.

IPC Magazines, the publisher of World Soccer, may pass your name and address to other reputable companies whose products and services may be of interest to you. Please tick this box if you prefer not to receive such offers. ☐



Special Offer

SPECIAL OFFER DESIGNER GEAR

FIREBIRD II TRACKSUIT
(Black/White, White/Coffee/Satellite, Navy/White, Navy/Pepper, Steel/Mustard, Pepper/Satellite/White, Vanilla/Navy)
Chest Size: 28/30, 30/2 — WERE £39.99 NOW £34.99
Chest Size: 32/4 — WERE £44.99 NOW £39.99
Chest Size: 36/8, 38/40, 42/4, 44/6 — WERE £54.99 NOW £49.99

SPORTSMAN PANTS
(Navy/Sky, Steel/Mustard, Ruby/Vanilla, Satellite/Pepper, Black/White *(not illustrated)*, Navy/White *(not illustrated)*)
Waist Size: 20, 22, 24, 26, 28 — WERE £17.99 NOW £15.99
Waist Size: 30, 32, 34, 36, 38 — WERE £21.99 NOW £19.99

SAMSON PANTS
(Black/White *(not illustrated)*, Navy/White *(illustrated on page 10)*)
Waist Size: 22, 24, 26, 28 — WERE £19.99 NOW £17.99
Waist Size: 30, 32, 34, 36, 38 — WERE £24.99 NOW £21.99

WORLD CUP GROUP A

BRAZIL

BRAZIL (Home/Away) SHIRT
Chest Size: 30/2 — £32.99
Chest Size: 32/4 — £39.99
Chest Size: 34/6, 38/40, 42/4, 44/6, 46/8 — £44.99

SCOTLAND

SCOTLAND (Home) SHIRT
Chest Size: 22/4, 26/8, 30/2 — £32.99
Chest Size: 34/6, 38/40, 42, 44, 46 — £44.99

SCOTLAND (Away) SHIRT
Chest Size: 22/4, 26/8, 30/2 — £29.99
Chest Size: 34/6, 38/40, 42, 44, 46 — £39.99

SCOTLAND WORLD CUP GK SHIRT
Chest Size: 26/8, 30/2 — £39.99
Chest Size: 34/6, 38/40, 42, 44, 46 — £49.99

SCOTLAND (Home) SHORTS
Waist Size: 24, 26, 28 — £16.99
Waist Size: 30, 32, 34, 36, 38 — £22.99

SCOTLAND (Away) SHORTS
Waist Size: 24, 26, 28 — £15.99
Waist Size: 30, 32, 34, 36, 38 — £21.99

SCOTLAND (Home/Away) SOCKS
Sizes: Junior £7.99 Senior £8.99

MOROCCO

MOROCCO (Home) SHIRT
Chest Size: 30/2 — £34.99
Chest Size: 34/6, 38/40, 42/4, 46/8 — £44.99

MOROCCO (Away) SHIRT
Chest Size: 38/40, 42/4, 46/8 — £44.99

NORWAY

NORWAY (Home/Away) SHIRT
Chest Size: 30/2 — £34.99
Chest Size: 34/6, 38/40, 42, 44, 46 — £44.99

PHONE YOUR ORDER ON OUR DIRECT HOTLINE NUMBER
01274 414411
OR FAX YOUR ORDER ON 01274 414412

Group B

ITALY
CHILE
CAMEROON
AUSTRIA

GROUP B

ITALY

ITALY (Home/Away) SHIRT
Chest Size: 30/2 £32.99
Chest Size: 32/4 £39.99
Chest Size: 34/6, 38/40, 42/4, 44/6, 46/8 £44.99

CHILE

CHILE (Home) SHIRT
Chest Size: 30/2 £34.99
Chest Size: 34/6, 38/40, 42/4, 46/8 £44.99
CHILE (Away) SHIRT
Chest Size: 38/40, 42/4, 46/8 £44.99

CAMEROON

CAMEROON (Home) SHIRT
Chest Size: 30/2 £34.99
Chest Size: 34/6, 38/40, 42/4, 46/8 £44.99
CAMEROON (Away) SHIRT
Chest Size: 38/40, 42/4, 46/8 £44.99

AUSTRIA

AUSTRIA (Home) SHIRT
Chest Size: 30/2 £34.99
Chest Size: 34/6, 38/40, 42/4, 46/8 £44.99
AUSTRIA (Away) SHIRT
Chest Size: 38/40, 42/4, 46/8 £44.99

GROUP C

FRANCE

FRANCE (Home/Away) SHIRT
Chest Size: 30/2 £34.99
Chest Size: 34/6, 38/40, 42/4, 46/8 £44.99

GROUP D

SPAIN

SPAIN (Home/Away) SHIRT
Chest Size: 30/2 £34.99
Chest Size: 34/6, 38/40, 42/4, 46/8 £44.99

NIGERIA

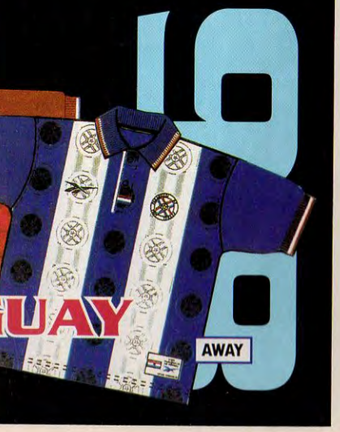
NIGERIA SHIRT
Chest Size: 34/6, 38/40, 42/4, 44/6, 46/8 £44.99

PARAGUAY

PARAGUAY (Home) SHIRT
Chest Size: 30/2 £34.99
Chest Size: 34/6, 38/40, 42/4, 46/8 £44.99
PARAGUAY (Away) SHIRT
Chest Size: 38/40, 42/4, 46/8 £44.99

BULGARIA

BULGARIA (Home) SHIRT
Chest Size: 30/2 £34.99
Chest Size: 34/6, 38/40, 42/4, 46/8 £44.99
BULGARIA (Away) SHIRT
Chest Size: 38/40, 42/4, 46/8 £44.99



Group C

FRANCE
SOUTH AFRICA
SAUDI ARABIA
DENMARK

Group D

SPAIN
NIGERIA
PARAGUAY
BULGARIA

Group E

HOLLAND
BELGIUM
SOUTH KOREA
MEXICO

GROUP E

HOLLAND

HOLLAND (Home/Away) SHIRT
Chest Size: 30/2 £32.99
Chest Size: 32/4 £39.99
Chest Size: 34/6, 38/40, 42/4, 44/6, 46/8 £44.99

MEXICO

MEXICO (Home) SHIRT
Chest Size: 30/2 £34.99
Chest Size: 34/6, 38/40, 42/4, 46/8 £44.99
MEXICO (Away) SHIRT
Chest Size: 38/40, 42/4, 46/8 £44.99

GROUP F

GERMANY

GERMANY (Home/Away) SHIRT
Chest Size: 30/2 £34.99
Chest Size: 34/6, 38/40, 42/4, 46/8 £44.99

UNITED STATES

UNITED STATES (Home) SHIRT
Chest Size: 34/6, 38/40, 42/4, 44/6, 46/8 £44.99

YUGOSLAVIA

YUGOSLAVIA (Home/Away) SHIRT
Chest Size: 30/2 £34.99
Chest Size: 34/6, 38/40, 42/4, 46/8 £44.99

GROUP G

ROMANIA

ROMANIA (Home/Away) SHIRT
Chest Size: 30/2 £34.99
Chest Size: 34/6, 38/40, 42/4, 46/8 £44.99

TUNISIA

TUNISIA (Home) SHIRT
Chest Size: 38/40, 42, 44, 46 £44.99

GROUP H

ARGENTINA

ARGENTINA (Home/Away) SHIRT
Chest Size: 30/2 £34.99
Chest Size: 34/6, 38/40, 42/4, 46/8 £44.99

JAMAICA

JAMAICA (Home) SHIRT
Sizes: S, M, L, XL £44.99

CROATIA

CROATIA (Home/Away) SHIRT
Chest Size: 38/40, 42, 44, 46 £44.99

Group G

ROMANIA
COLOMBIA
ENGLAND
TUNISIA

Group F

GERMANY
UNITED STATES
YUGOSLAVIA
IRAN

Group H

ARGENTINA
JAPAN
JAMAICA
CROATIA

GROUP G

ENGLAND

TEAMWEAR

TEAM SHIRT (Home/Away)
Chest Size: 22/4, 26/8, 30/2 £29.99
Chest Size: 34/6, 38/40, 42, 44, 46 £39.99

WORLD CUP GK SHIRT
Chest Size: 26/8, 30/2 £39.99
Chest Size: 34/6, 38/40, 42, 44, 46 £49.99

LONG-SLEEVED SHIRT (Home/Away)
Chest Size: 30/2 SPECIAL OFFER PRICE £34.99
Chest Size: 34/6, 38/40, 42, 44, 46 SPECIAL OFFER PRICE £44.99

SHORTS (Home/Away)
Waist Size: 24, 26, 28 £15.99
Waist Size: 30, 32, 34, 36, 38 £21.99

WORLD CUP GK SHORTS
Waist Size: 26, 28 £17.99
Waist Size: 30, 32, 34, 36, 38 £24.99

SOCKS (Home/Away)
Sizes: Junior £7.99 Senior £8.99

WORLD CUP GK SOCKS
Sizes: Junior £7.99 Senior £8.99

INFANT KITS
Sizes: 1/2, 3/4, 5/6 £19.99

LEISUREWEAR

UMBRO RETRO SHIRT (Home/Away)
Chest Size: 26/8, 30/2 £25.50
Chest Size: 38/40, 42, 44, 46 £29.99

ADIDAS RETRO T-SHIRT (White)
Chest Size: 34/6, 38/40, 42/4, 44/6, 46/8 £29.99

ADIDAS WACKY T-SHIRT
Chest Size: 32/4, 34/6, 38/40, 42, 44, 46 £14.99

SHELLSUIT
Chest Size: 26, 28, 30, 32 £67.99
Chest Size: 34/6, 38/40, 42, 44 £79.99

TRACKSUIT
Chest Size: 26, 28, 30, 32 £49.99
Chest Size: 34/6, 38/40, 42, 44 £59.99

LINED JACKET
Chest Size: 26/8, 30/2 £42.99
Chest Size: 34/6, 38/40, 42, 44, 46 £49.99

SHOWER JACKET
Chest Size: 30/2 £36.99
Chest Size: 34/6, 38/40, 42, 44, 46 £44.99

V-NECK POLY T-SHIRT (White)
Chest Size: 26/8, 30/2 £29.99
Chest Size: 34/6, 38/40, 42, 44, 46 £34.99

COLLARED COTTON T-SHIRT (Navy)
Chest Size: 30/2 £19.99
Chest Size: 34/6, 38/40, 42, 44, 46 £24.99

COTTON T-SHIRT (White)
Chest Size: 30/2 £17.99
Chest Size: 34/6, 38/40, 42, 44, 46 £21.99

3 LIONS T-SHIRT
Chest Size: 30/2 £14.99
Chest Size: 38/40, 42, 44, 46 £16.99

LEAGUE PIQUE SHIRT (White Marl)
Chest Size: 30/2 £16.99
Chest Size: 34/6, 38/40, 42, 44, 46 £19.99

GREEN FLAG PIQUE SHIRT (Navy)
Chest Size: 30/2 £19.99
Chest Size: 38/40, 42, 44, 46 £22.99

SWEAT TOP
Chest Size: 30/2 £33.99
Chest Size: 34/6, 38/40, 42, 44, 46 £39.99

POLY SHORTS (Navy)
Waist Size: 26, 28 £13.99
Waist Size: 30, 32, 34, 36, 38, 40 £16.99

PANEL PIQUE SHIRT
Chest Size: 34/6, 38/40, 42, 44, 46
WAS £29.99 NOW ONLY £24.99

ACCESSORIES

HOLDALL	£16.99
BACKPACK II	£9.99
SHOEBAG	£5.99
WALLET	£4.99

WORLD CUP LEISUREWEAR

BRAZIL

BRAZIL GLOBAL T-SHIRT
Chest Size: 30/2 £12.99
Chest Size: 34/6, 38/40, 42, 44, 46 £16.99

BRAZIL RETRO T-SHIRT
Chest Size: 34/6, 38/40, 42/4, 44/6, 46/8 £29.99

BRAZIL WACKY T-SHIRT
Chest Size: 32/4, 34/6, 38/40, 42, 44, 46 £14.99

ITALY

ITALY GLOBAL T-SHIRT
Chest Size: 30/2 £12.99
Chest Size: 34/6, 38/40, 42, 44, 46 £16.99

ITALY RETRO T-SHIRT
Chest Size: 34/6, 38/40, 42/4, 44/6, 46/8 £29.99

ITALY WACKY T-SHIRT
Chest Size: 32/4, 34/6, 38/40, 42, 44, 46 £14.99

FRANCE

FRANCE WACKY T-SHIRT
Chest Size: 32/4, 34/6, 38/40, 42, 44, 46 £14.99

SPAIN

SPAIN RETRO T-SHIRT
Chest Size: 34/6, 38/40, 42/4, 44/6, 46/8 £29.99

HOLLAND

HOLLAND GLOBAL T-SHIRT *(not illustrated)*
Chest Size: 30/2 £12.99
Chest Size: 34/6, 38/40, 42, 44, 46 £16.99

HOLLAND RETRO T-SHIRT
Chest Size: 34/6, 38/40, 42/4, 44/6, 46/8 £29.99

GERMANY

GERMANY RETRO T-SHIRT
Chest Size: 34/6, 38/40, 42/4, 44/6, 46/8 £29.99

GERMANY WACKY T-SHIRT
Chest Size: 32/4, 34/6, 38/40, 42, 44, 46 £14.99

DESIGNERWEAR

RALPH LAUREN

RALPH LAUREN CHAPS OXFORD SHIRT
(Orange, Red, Green, Blue, Purple, Peach)
Sizes: M, L, XL WAS £49.99 NOW £17.99

RALPH LAUREN YARMOUTH DRESS SHIRT
(Sky, Pink, Yellow, White)
Sizes: S, M, L, XL WAS £79.99 NOW £37.99

RALPH LAUREN CHAPS SHIRT
(Brown, Sand, Purple, Rust)
Sizes: L or XL WAS £49.99 NOW £14.99

TOMMY HILFIGER

TOMMY HILFIGER STAR SWEATSHIRT
(Grey, Royal, Black)
Sizes: L or XL WAS £79.99 NOW £24.99

FILA

FILA T-SHIRT
(Navy, Black, White, Grey)
Sizes: S, M, L, XL WAS £16.99 NOW £11.99
OR 2 FOR £20.00

KAPPA

KAPPA TRACKSUIT
Sizes: S, M, L, XL, XXL
WAS £59.99 NOW £19.99

CALVIN KLEIN

CALVIN KLEIN JEANS (Navy)
Waist Sizes: 32, 34, 36, 38 Leg: 34
WAS £79.99 NOW £29.99

REEBOK

REEBOK BGS BACKPACK (Blue)
(not illustrated) WAS £19.99 NOW £7.99

REEBOK GRAPHIC BACKPACK (Black)
(not illustrated) WAS £17.99 NOW £6.99

REEBOK GENERIC BACKPACK (Burgundy)
(not illustrated) WAS £19.99 NOW £7.99

UMBRO

UMBRO CHALLENGER SWEAT SHIRT (Navy)
Sizes: M, L, XL, XXL WAS £39.99 NOW £19.99

UMBRO SHOWER JACKET (Black)
Sizes: L, XL WAS £39.99 NOW £19.99

PHONE YOUR ORDER ON OUR DIRECT HOTLINE NUMBER
01274 414411
OR FAX YOUR ORDER ON 01274 414412

Designer Sportswear

SPECIAL OFFER PRICES!

ADIDAS

FOOTBALL BOOTS

EQUIPMENT PREDATOR ACCELERATOR LIGA (Red or White)
Boot Sizes: 6, 7, 7½, 8, 8½, 9, 9½, 10, 10½, 11, 12 — £119.99

EQUIPMENT PREDATOR ACCELERATOR CUP
Boot Sizes: 6, 7, 8, 8½, 9, 9½, 10, 11, 12 — £119.99

PREDATOR RAPIER TRAXION CUP
Boot Sizes: 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 — £89.99

VENOM TRAXION CUP
Boot Sizes: 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 — £54.99

QUANTRO TRAXION CUP
Boot Sizes: 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 — £34.99

JUNIOR PREDATOR RAPIER TRAXION (Black, Red or White *(not illustrated)*)
Boot Sizes: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 5½ — £39.99

JUNIOR VENOM TRAXION
Boot Sizes: 3, 4, 5, 5½ — £34.99

JUNIOR QUANTRO TRAXION (Black or Navy)
Boot Sizes: 3, 4, 5, 5½ — £24.99

TRAINING SHOES

QUANTRO TEAM
Shoe Sizes: 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 — £29.99

JUNIOR QUANTRO TEAM (Black/Red or Black/Blue *(not illustrated)*)
Shoe Sizes: 2, 3, 4, 5, 5½ — £21.99

NIKE

FOOTBALL BOOTS

AIR MERCURIAL SG
Boot Sizes: 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 — £99.99

AIR GX SG
Boot Sizes: 6, 7, 8, 8½, 9, 9½, 10, 11, 12 — £99.99

AIR ROMA SG
Boot Sizes: 6, 7, 8, 8½, 9, 9½, 10, 11, 12 — £49.99

ULTRA CELL (Blue)
Boot Sizes: 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 — £29.99

JUNIOR AIR GX SG
Boot Sizes: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 5½ — £39.99

JUNIOR ULTRA CELL (Silver or Blue *(not illustrated)*)
Boot Sizes: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 5½ — £21.99

TRAINING SHOES

AIR MAX TRIAX
Shoe Sizes: 6 - 11 — £79.99

AIR MAX TRIAX NB
Shoe Sizes: 6 - 11 — £79.99

AIR MAX TRIAX IV BG
Shoe Sizes: 6 - 11 — £79.99

AIR LEVITY
Shoe Sizes: 6 - 11 — £44.99

WOMENS AIR MAX TRIAX
Shoe Sizes: 3 - 9 — £79.99

WOMENS AIR LEVITY
Shoe Sizes: 3 - 9 — £44.99

JUNIOR AIR MAX TRIAX
Shoe Sizes: 1 - 5½ — £49.99

JUNIOR AIR MAX TRIAX IV BG
Shoe Sizes: 1 - 5½ — £49.99

JUNIOR MENTAUR
Shoe Sizes: 1 - 5½ — £24.99

JUNIOR AIR SUNDER
Shoe Sizes: 1 - 5½ — £44.99

JUNIOR AIR MAX TRIAX GG
Shoe Sizes: 1 - 5 — WAS £49.99 NOW £29.99

REEBOK

TRAINING SHOES

INTERVAL HEXALITE (Teal or Navy *(not illustrated)*)
Shoe Sizes: 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 — WAS £59.99 NOW £29.99

JUNIOR INTERVAL HEXALITE (Teal)
Shoe Sizes: 4, 5, 6, 6½ — WAS £39.99 NOW £19.99

THROTTLE LEATHER HEXALITE (White/Blue)
Shoe Sizes: 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 — WAS £59.99 NOW £29.99

PUMA

TRAINING SHOES

RAIDER TRINOMIC LEISURE SHOE
Shoe Sizes: 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 — WAS £34.99 NOW £19.99

ASICS

FOOTBALL BOOTS

INSPIRE (Red)
Boot Size: 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 — £29.99

INSPIRE (Blue) *(not illustrated)*
Boot Size: 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 — £29.99

FOOTBALLS

EQUIPMENT TRICOLORE GAME BALL — £54.99

TRICOLORE REPLIQUE REPLICA BALL
Sizes: 4 or 5 — £9.99

New Releases

NEW FOR 1998/99

LIVERPOOL

LIVERPOOL SHIRT (Home)
Chest Size: 22/4, 26/8, 30/2 £29.99
Chest Size: 32/4, 34/6, 38/40, 42/4, 46/8, 50/2 £42.99
LIVERPOOL LONG-SLEEVED SHIRT (Home)
Chest Size: 38/40, 44/6 £44.99
LIVERPOOL SHORTS (Home)
Waist Size: 24, 26, 28 £16.99
Waist Size: 30, 32, 34, 36, 38 £22.99
LIVERPOOL SOCKS (Home)
Sizes: Junior £6.99 Senior £8.99
LIVERPOOL GOALKEEPER SHIRT (Home)
Chest Size: 22/4, 26/8, 30/2 £29.99
Chest Size: 32/4, 34/6, 38/40, 42/4, 46/8, 50/2 £44.99
LIVERPOOL RETRO WAFFLE T-SHIRT
Chest Size: 34/6, 38/40, 42/4, 44/6 £27.99

MANCHESTER UTD

MANCHESTER UTD SHIRT (Home)
Chest Size: 22/4, 26/8, 30/2 £32.99
Chest Size: 34/6, 38/40, 42, 44, 46 £44.99
MANCHESTER UTD SHIRT (Away)
Chest Size: 22/4, 26/8, 30/2 £29.99
Chest Size: 34/6, 38/40, 42, 44, 46 £39.99
MANCHESTER UTD SHORTS (Home)
Waist Size: 24, 26, 28 £16.99
Waist Size: 30, 32, 34, 36, 38 £22.99
MANCHESTER UTD SHORTS (Away)
Waist Size: 24, 26, 28 £15.99
Waist Size: 30, 32, 34, 36, 38 £21.99
MANCHESTER UTD SOCKS (Home/Away)
Sizes: Junior £7.99 Senior £8.99
MANCHESTER UTD INFANT KITS (Home)
Sizes: 1/2, 3/4, 5/6 £22.99
MANCHESTER UTD INFANT KITS (Away)
Sizes: 1/2, 3/4, 5/6 £19.99
MANCHESTER UTD POLY TAPED T-SHIRT
Chest Size: 30/2 £14.99
Chest Size: 34/6, 38/40, 42, 44, 46 £19.99
MANCHESTER UTD PRINTED WARM-UP
Chest Size: 30/2 £12.99
Chest Size: 34/6, 38/40, 42, 44, 46 £14.99
MANCHESTER UTD PIQUE SHIRT
Chest Size: 30/2 £16.99
Chest Size: 34/6, 38/40, 42, 44, 46 £19.99

LEEDS UNITED

LEEDS UTD SHIRT (Home)
Chest Size: 24/6, 26/8, 30/2 £29.99
Chest Size: 32/4 £34.99
Chest Size: 34/6, 38/40, 42/4, 44/6, 46/8 £39.99
LEEDS UTD SHORTS (Home)
Waist Size: 24, 26, 28 £17.99
Waist Size: 30, 32, 34, 36, 38 £22.99
LEEDS UTD SOCKS (Home)
Sizes: Junior £6.99 Senior £7.99
LEEDS UTD GOALKEEPER SHIRT (Home)
Chest Size: 26/8, 30/2 £34.99
Chest Size: 32/4 £39.99
Chest Size: 34/6, 38/40, 42/4, 44/6 £44.99

SHEFFIELD WEDNESDAY

SHEFFIELD WEDNESDAY SHIRT (Away)
Chest Size: 24/6, 26/8, 30/2 £29.99
Chest Size: 32/4 £34.99
Chest Size: 34/6, 38/40, 42/4, 44/6, 46/8 £39.99
SHEFFIELD WEDNESDAY SHORTS (Away)
Waist Size: 24, 26, 28 £17.99
Waist Size: 30, 32, 34, 36, 38 £22.99
SHEFFIELD WEDNESDAY SOCKS (Away)
Sizes: Junior £6.99 Senior £7.99

CHELSEA

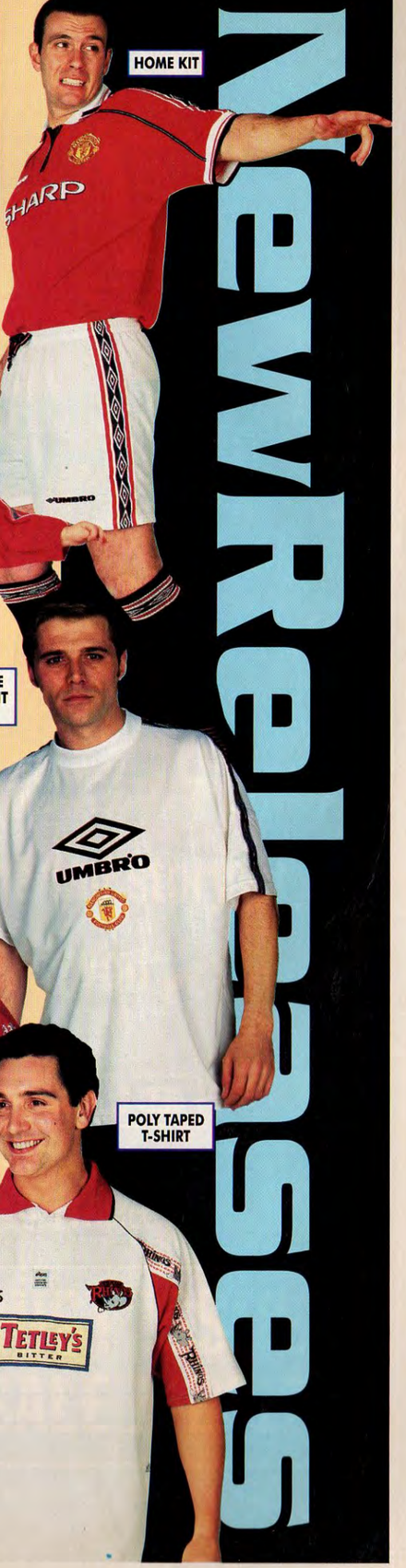
CHELSEA SHIRT (Away)
Chest Size: 22/4, 26/8, 30/2 £32.99
Chest Size: 34/6, 38/40, 42, 44, 46 £44.99
CHELSEA SHORTS (Away)
Waist Size: 24, 26, 28 £16.99
Waist Size: 30, 32, 34, 36, 38 £22.99
CHELSEA SOCKS (Away)
Sizes: Junior £7.99 Senior £8.99
CHELSEA INFANT KITS (Away)
Sizes: 1/2, 3/4, 5/6 £22.99

CURRENT PREMIER SHIRTS

EVERTON (Home), CELTIC (Home)
Chest Size: 22/4, 26/8, 30/2 £29.99
Chest Size: 34/6, 38/40, 42, 44, 46 £39.99
ARSENAL (Away)
Chest Size: 26/8 £31.99
Chest Size: 32/4 £36.99
Chest Size: 34/6, 38/40, 42/4, 44/6 £42.99
NEWCASTLE (Home)
Chest Size: 26/8, 30/2 £29.99
Chest Size: 32/4 £34.99
Chest Size: 34/6, 38/40, 42/4, 44/6, 46/8 £39.99

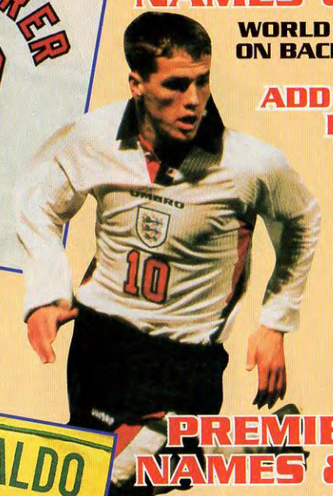
RUGBY LEAGUE

BRADFORD BULLS (Home/Away) SHIRT
LEEDS RHINOS (Home/Away) SHIRT
Chest Size: S, M, L, XL, XXL £42.99



PHONE YOUR ORDER ON OUR DIRECT HOTLINE NUMBER
01274 414411
OR FAX YOUR ORDER ON 01274 414411

Names & Numbers



WORLD CUP NAMES & NUMBERS

WORLD CUP NAME & NUMBER ON BACK WITH SMALL NUMBER ON FRONT

ADD £5 TO PRICE OF PLAIN SHIRT

Choose from:
SHEARER 9
OWEN 10
BECKHAM 7
(on England Home/Away)
DEL PIERO 10
(on Italy Home)
RONALDO 9
(on Brazil Home)
KLUIVERT 9
(on Holland Home)

PREMIER LEAGUE NAMES & NUMBERS

Premier League Names & Numbers can be attached to any shirt of your choice!

ANY NAME AND SINGLE Nº (0 to 9)
ADD £4 TO PRICE OF PLAIN SHIRT

ANY NAME AND DOUBLE Nº (10 to 99)
ADD £6 TO PRICE OF PLAIN SHIRT

PREMIER LEAGUE BADGES
ONLY £3.50 per pair
(applied on request)

PLEASE NOTE : When purchasing team shirts, shorts and socks, please state whether you are ordering a Home, Away or 3rd (if available) kit.

QTY	ITEM DESCRIPTION	COLOUR	SIZE	PRICE

If there is not enough room on the order coupon, please complete your order details on a separate sheet of paper.

CUSTOMER REFERENCE:

POSTAGE	
TOTAL	

I WISH TO PAY BY BARCLAYCARD / ACCESS:

I WISH TO PAY BY SWITCH CARD:

EXPIRY DATE: ISSUE NUMBER: EXPIRY DATE:

NAME:

ADDRESS:

POSTCODE:

TEL. No. :

PLEASE MAKE CHEQUE OR P/O PAYABLE TO 'REPLICA WORLD' AND POST TO:
REPLICA WORLD, P.O. BOX BD401, BRADFORD, BD12 OSE, WEST YORKS
TEL: 01274 414411
FAX: 01274 414412

E-MAIL: repworld@legend.co.uk
WEB SITE: http://www.replicaworld.co.uk

Please allow £2.50per order (£3.50 per pair on footwear) P&P & Insurance.
For postal rates outside U.K., prices on application.
Payments accepted in sterling only.
Delivery subject to item availability.
Please allow up to 28 days for delivery.

REPLICA WORLD

2160 - 5/98

NEXT MONTH

The Full Monty

The World Cup uncovered

Our reporting team, led by Keir Radnedge and Gavin Hamilton, will bring you the full story of how the 16th World Cup finals was won

- The highs...
- The lows...
- The winners...
- The losers...
- The inside story

PLUS

Every statistic that matters from France 98

AUGUST ISSUE ON SALE JULY 17

Napoli 2 (Bellucci 17, Stojak 47)
Bari 2 (Guerrero 5, Volpi 37)

Parma 1 (D Baggio 5)
Brescia 3 (Bizzari 33, 44, Neri pen 72)

Roma 2 (Totti 24, Delvecchio 90)
Sampdoria 0

Vicenza 1 (Dicara 14)
Udinese 3 (Amoroso 1, Bierhoff 32, 39)

ITALY - FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Juventus	34	21	11	2	67	28	74
Inter	34	21	6	7	62	27	69
Udinese	34	19	7	8	62	40	64
Parma	34	15	12	7	55	39	57
Roma	34	16	11	7	67	42	59
Fiorentina	34	15	12	7	65	36	57
Lazio	34	16	8	10	53	30	56
Sampdoria	34	13	9	12	52	55	48
Bologna	34	12	12	10	55	46	48
Milan	34	11	11	12	37	43	44
Bari	34	10	8	16	30	45	38
Piacenza	34	7	16	11	29	38	37
Empoli	34	10	8	16	45	58	37
Vicenza	34	9	9	16	36	61	36
Brescia	34	9	8	17	45	63	35
Atalanta	34	7	11	16	25	48	32
Lecce	34	6	8	20	32	72	26
Napoli	34	2	8	24	25	76	14

ITALIAN CUP FINAL - 2ND LEG

Apr 29: Lazio 3 Milan 1
Lazio win 3-2 on agg

LUXEMBOURG

LUXEMBOURG - FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Jeunesse Esch	22	17	3	2	69	19	54
Union	22	17	2	3	67	21	3
Grevenmacher	22	13	4	5	49	23	43
Dudelange	22	10	6	6	44	32	36
Avenir Beggen	22	10	5	7	41	35	35
Hobscheid	22	8	7	7	38	35	31
Sporting Mertzig	22	8	6	8	44	41	30
Wiltz	22	6	7	9	38	45	25
Petange	22	5	5	12	33	53	20 /
Spora Luxembourg	22	5	4	13	31	55	19
Rumelange	22	4	4	14	25	74	16
Red Boys	22	0	5	17	15	61	5

MALTA

MALTA - FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Valletta	27	20	5	2	66	19	65
Birkirkara	27	20	3	4	59	22	63
Sliema Wanderers	27	18	2	7	64	26	56
Hibernians	27	15	4	8	50	33	49
Floriana	27	13	6	8	48	27	45
Pieta Hotspurs	27	10	2	15	40	44	32
Naxxar Lions	27	7	7	13	34	47	28
Hamrun Spartans	27	7	6	14	26	49	27
Xghajra Tornadoes	27	2	6	19	18	71	12
Tanxien Rainbows	27	1	3	23	14	81	6

N IRELAND

Apr 25: Ards 0 Ballymena 2; Glentoran 1 Crusaders 1; Linfield 2 Glenavon 0; Omagh 1 Coleraine 3; Portadown 1 Cliftonville 2.

N. IRELAND - FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Cliftonville	36	20	8	8	49	37	68
Linfield	36	17	13	6	50	19	64
Glentoran	36	18	8	10	54	33	62
Portadown	36	16	9	11	49	40	57
Crusaders	36	13	12	11	51	51	51
Ballymena	36	14	9	13	54	55	51
Coleraine	36	11	11	14	44	49	44
Glenavon	36	8	13	15	49	59	37
Omagh	36	7	10	19	43	68	31
Ards	36	4	11	21	31	63	23

NORWAY

Apr 26: Bodo/Glimt 2 Moss 1; Brann 2 Molde 2; Haugesund 0 Rosenborg 3; Sogndal 2 Stromsgodset 2; Stabæk 2 Kongsvinger 1; Viking 1 Tromso 2.
Apr 27: Lillestrom 3 Valerenga 2.
Apr 30: Kongsvinger 0 Bodo/Glimt 0; Molde 1 Stabæk 1; Moss 1 Sogndal 1; Rosenborg 6 Lillestrom 1; Stromsgodset 1 Viking 5; Tromso 2 Haugesund 1; Valerenga 3 Brann 2.
May 3: Bodo/Glimt 0 Molde 2; Haugesund 1 Stromsgodset 1; Lillestrom 2 Tromso 1; Moss 2 Kongsvinger 0; Sogndal 1 Viking 2; Stabæk 2 Valerenga 0.
May 4: Brann 0 Rosenborg 0.
May 7: Kongsvinger 3 Sogndal 2; Molde 6 Moss 0; Rosenborg 2 Stabæk 2; Stromsgodset 2 Lillestrom 3; Tromso 1 Brann 0; Viking 3 Haugesund 1; Valerenga 2 Bodo/Glimt 2.
May 10: Bodo/Glimt 2 Rosenborg 6; Brann 0 Stromsgodset 1; Kongsvinger 0 Molde 3; Lillestrom 2 Viking 3; Sogndal 0 Haugesund 4; Stabæk 1 Tromso 0.

NORWAY

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Rosenborg	7	5	2	0	22	6	17
Molde	7	5	2	0	21	5	17
Viking	7	5	0	2	18	10	15
Stabæk	7	4	2	1	11	7	14
Tromso	7	3	2	2	8	7	11
Moss	6	3	1	2	6	9	10
Lillestrom	7	3	0	4	11	21	9
Kongsvinger	7	2	2	3	9	11	8
Bodo/Glimt	7	2	2	3	11	14	8
Valerenga	6	2	1	3	10	14	7
Stromsgodset	7	1	3	3	9	15	6
Haugesund	7	1	1	5	11	15	4
Brann	7	0	3	4	6	10	3
Sogndal	7	0	3	4	6	15	3

POLAND

Apr 26: Odra 1 Wisla 1; Petrochemia 1 Katowice 0; Pogon 1 GKS 2; Polonia 1 Lech 1; Rakow 0 Gornik 4; Ruch 2 Zaglebie 1; Stomil 1 Legia 1.
Apr 27: Groclin 1 Ostrowiec 3; Widzew 1 Amica 1.
Apr 29: Katowice 1 Ruch 0.
May 2: Katowice 0 Amica 0; Gornik 2 Ruch 0; Ostrowiec 3 Pogon 2; Lech 3 Groclin 1; GKS 3 Stomil 1; Legia 3 Petrochemia 0; Odra 1 Widzew 1; Wisla 3 Rakow 0; Zaglebie 0 Polonia 1.
May 9: Amica 0 Legia 1; Groclin 1 Zaglebie 3; Petrochemia 1 GKS 1; Pogon 0 Lech 0; Polonia 3 Gornik 1; Rakow 0 Odra 2; Ruch 1 Wisla 0; Stomil 2 Ostrowiec 0; Widzew 2 Katowice 0.

POLAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
GKS	28	16	7	5	44	19	55
Polonia	28	14	9	5	36	22	51
Legia	28	13	11	4	43	24	50
Ruch	28	13	9	6	40	28	48
Wisla	28	13	7	8	34	27	46
Widzew	28	13	6	9	42	31	45
Gornik	28	11	9	8	41	35	42
Amica	28	10	10	8	31	26	40
Katowice	28	10	9	9	32	25	39
Zaglebie	28	11	4	13	35	35	37
Stomil	28	10	7	11	30	34	37
Pogon	28	8	11	9	33	36	35
Petrochemia	28	9	7	12	24	38	34
Lech	28	8	9	11	32	34	33
Odra	28	9	6	13	32	47	33
Groclin	28	8	5	15	25	39	29
Ostrowiec	28	5	5	18	21	38	20
Rakow	28	3	5	20	15	52	14

PORTUGAL

Friday, April 24

Maritimo 1 (Bunbury 34)
Salgueiros 4 (Nandinho 10, Abilio 39, Jose Luis 57, Schuster 79)

Saturday, April 25

Varzim 0
Benfica 0

Sunday, April 26

Belenenses 2 (Johansen 14, Caetano 88)
Rio Ave 4 (Gama 5, Marcos 15, Baica 54, Sergio China 80)

Campomaiorense 5 (Jorginho 28, Rene 49, Isaias 53, Sousa 75, Demetrios 78)
Farense 2 (Ramos 14, Besirovic 24)

Estrela Amadora 0
Guimaraes 1 (Gilmar 51)

Leca 0
Chaves 1 (Putnik 46)

FC Porto 3 (Sergio Conceicao 32, Paulinho Santos pen 56, Zahovic 78)
Boavista 2 (Martelinho 74, Timofte 90)

Vitoria Setubal 5 (Chipenda 28, Rui Carlos 58, 68, Carlos Manuel 65, Tonito 78)
Sporting Braga 1 (Carlitos 75)

Monday, April 27

Academica 1 (Gaucho 40)
Sporting Lisbon 1 (Paulo Alves 46)

Friday, May 1

Maritimo 2 (Ruis Oscar 58, Carlos Jorge 87)
Belenenses 0

Saturday, May 2

Benfica 3 (Deane 15, Poborsky 23, El Khalej 87)
FC Porto 0

Boavista 4 (Martelinho 15, Leal og 45, Latapy 77, Ayew 84)
Estrela Amadora 0

Sunday, May 3

Chaves 1 (Lewis 16)
Campomaiorense 0

Salgueiros 3 (Abilio 31, 73, Artur Jorge 44)
Varzim 1 (Lino 86)

Sporting Braga 3 (Bajcetic 26, 61, Carlitos 84)
Academica 2 (Abazaj 6, Vargas 72)

Farense 2 (Ramos 28, Mauro Soares 48)
Vitoria Setubal 0

Sporting Lisbon 2 (Paulo Alves 10, Jordanov 90)
Rio Ave 2 (Gama 54, Adelar 77)

Guimaraes 0
Leca 0

Friday, May 8

Sporting Lisbon 1 (Vidigal 85)
Belenenses 0

Sunday, May 10

Academica 1 (Joao Tomas 35)
Farense 0

Campomaiorense 2 (Isaias pen 67, Demetrios 89)
Guimaraes 3 (Jose Carlos 27, Gilmar 36, Marco Freitas 82)

Leca 0
Boavista 3 (Jorge Couto 19, Ayew 87, 90)

FC Porto 7 (Jardel 11, 24, 34, 61 pen, 90, Drulovic 57, Zahovic 88)
Salgueiros 2 (Artur Jorge 8, Nandinho 52)

Rio 0
Sporting Braga 4 (Bajcetic 21, 44, Formoso 59, Prokopenko 89)

Varzim 0
Maritimo 4 (Romeu 38, 53, Fonseca 47, Herivelto 77)

Vitoria Setubal 1 (Chiquinho Conde pen 89)
Chaves 2 (Auri 57, Miner 86)

PORTUGAL - FINAL TABLE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Porto	34	24	5	5	75	38	77
Benfica	34	20	8	6	62	29	68
Vitoria Guimaraes	34	17	8	9	42	25	59
Sporting Lisbon	34	15	11	8	45	31	56
Maritimo	34	16	8	10	44	35	56
Boavista	34	15	10	9	54	31 5	5
Estrela Amadora	34	14	8	12	41	42	50
Salgueiros	34	13	10	11	48	44	49
Rio Ave	34	12	10	12	43	43	46
Braga	34	11	12	11	48	49	45
Campomaiorense	34	11	7	16	53	58	40
Leca	34	10	8	16	29	52	38
Vitoria Setubal	34	10	7	17	38	43	37
Farense	34	8	13	13	41	50	37
Academica	34	8 1	2	14	27	41	36
Chaves	34	10	5	19	31	55	35
Varzim	34	6	11	17	26	51	29
Belenenses	34	5	9	20	22	52	24

REP. OF IRELAND

Apr 22: Finn Harps 1 Cork 2.
Apr 24: Drogheda 1 Kilkenny 1; Shelbourne 2 Shamrock 1.
Apr 25: Derry 0 Finn Harps 0.
Apr 26: Cork 2 Bohemians 0; St.Pats 4 Dundalk 2; UCD 5 Sligo 1.
May 2: Dundalk 2 Shelbourne 1; Kilkenny 1 St.Pats 2; Shamrock 2 Cork 2.
May 3: Bohemians 2 UCD 0; Derry 3 Drogheda 0; Sligo 0 Finn Harps 2.

Promotion/Relegation play-offs

May 5: UCD 2 Limerick 1.
May 8: Limerick 1 UCD 3
UCD win 5-2 on agg and stay in Premier Division

REP. OF IRELAND - FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
St. Pats.	33	19	11	3	46	24	68
Shelbourne	33	20	7	6	58	32	67
Cork	33	14	11	8	50	40	53
Shamrock	33	14	10	9	41	31	52
Bohemians	33	13	11	9	50	36	50
Dundalk	33	12	9	12	41	43	45
Sligo	33	10	14	9	46	49	44
Finn Harps	33	12	7	14	41	43	43
Derry	33	10	10	13	29	31	40
UCD	33	9	12	12	36	38	39
Kilkenny	33	4	7	22	27	63	19
Drogheda	33	2	9	22	20	55	15

ROMANIA

Apr 18: Arges 1 Otelul 1; Ceahlaul 2 Foresta 1; Dambovita 4 Jiul 0; Dinamo 4 National 2; Farul 1 U.Cluj 3; Petrolul 1 Steaua 2; Rapid 1 Resita 0; Sportul 2 Gloria 3; U.Craiova 0 Bacau 2.
Apr 25: Bacau 1 Rapid 0; Resita 0 Dinamo 0; Foresta 0 U.Craiova 1; Gloria 2 Ceahlaul 1; Jiul 0 Petrolul 2; National 0 Arges 0; Otelul 2 Dambovita 1; Steaua 1 Farul 0; U.Cluj 4 Sportul 0.
Apr 29: Arges 2 Resita 1; Ceahlaul 3 U.Craiova 2; Dambovita 2 National 0; Dinamo 6 Bacau 2; Farul 3 Jiul 0; Gloria 2 U.Cluj 2; Petrolul 1 Otelul 1; Rapid 3 Foresta 0; Sportul 1 Steaua 1.
May 2: Bacau 5 Arges 3; Resita 6 Dambovita 1; Foresta 3 Dinamo 1; Jiul 1 Sportul 0; National 1 Petrolul 0; Otelul 1 Farul 0; Steaua 5 Gloria 2; U.Cluj 3 Ceahlaul 3; U.Craiova 2 Rapid 2.

ROMANIA - FINAL

	P	W	L	D	F	A	Pts
Steaua	34	25	5	4	83	36	80
Rapid	34	24	6	4	70	24	78
Arges	34	20	5	9	56	38	65
Otelul	34	19	5	10	53	28	62
National	34	18	7	9	57	39	61
Dinamo	34	17	3	14	66	50	54
Resita	34	15	6	13	55	49	51
U.Craiova	34	15	4	15	65	46	49
Ceahlaul	34	13	8	13	46	50	47
Bacau	34	12	9	13	41	42	45
Gloria	34	13	5	16	56	63	44
Farul	34	13	5	16	37	51	44
U.Cluj	34	11	7	16	41	40	40
Petrolul	34	11	7	16	41	45	40
Foresta	34	10	9	15	32	41	39
Dambovita	34	10	8	16	40	67	38
Sportul	34	5	4	25	32	65	19
Jiul	34	3	1	30	19	116	10

The disentangling of Alan Shearer

WHAT OF Alan Shearer? His opportunism and experience will be essential to England in this World Cup.

They surely should survive the first, qualifying, stage, but are much less likely to get through the second. There, Argentina or Croatia almost surely will be lurking. Neither would pardon the ragged defensive performances we saw at Wembley against Chile and Portugal.

Shearer was named man of the match in that second game, and took his goals impressively well, but for me the man of the match was beyond doubt David Seaman, which, even after a 3-0 victory, was a sobering thought. After a somewhat erratic season, Seaman returned from injury to look as fine, commanding and agile a keeper as he did when he played so well in Euro 96.

And Shearer? I was amazed by some of the Jesuitical contortions of his defenders, after the Neil Lennon 'kick-in-the-face-that-wasn't' affair. Glenn Hoddle, perhaps predictably, Gary Lineker and Gordon Taylor queued up to defend what had seemed indefensible.

The World Cup is to be played in France, so it is legitimate to use a French expression: *qui s'excuse s'accuse*. Who excuses himself accuses himself. By that token, Shearer was ill-advised to give an unconvincing conference. The notion that he was simply "disentangling" himself when television quite clearly showed him turning round to Lennon was bizarre.

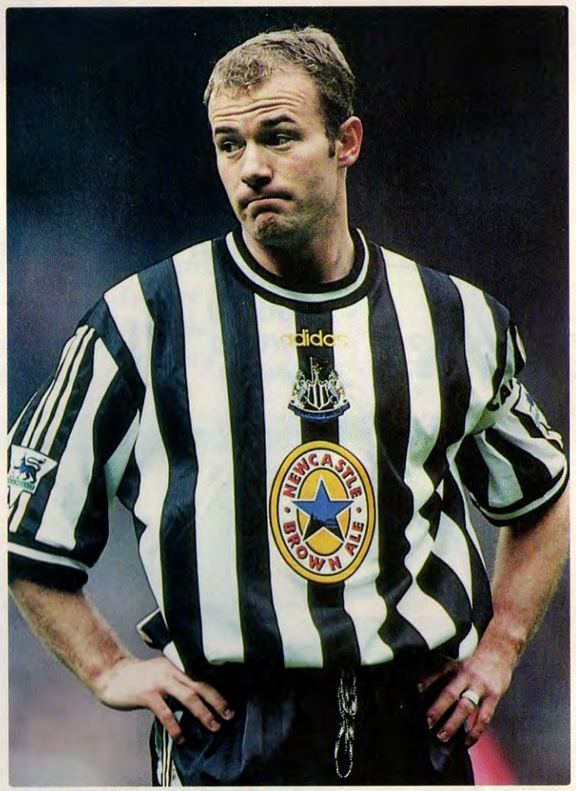
To say he hadn't the skills of Pele or George Best was monumentally irrelevant. Little can he know of Pele, who was an expert at looking after himself.

A Chilean international called Cruz would bear testimony to that; he felt the force of Pele's boot when he had been maltreating him throughout one game. And what of Brazil-Argentina 1964? The Argentinians had put a player called Messiano on Pele, fouling and hacking at him from the start. In the end Pele had had enough. He butted Messiano in the face, breaking his nose.

The sequel, however, was a strange one. Pele was so overcome by guilt that he scarcely figured in the rest of the game. Indeed Argentina sent on Telch as substitute, he scored twice, and they romped away with the game.

One of the silliest propositions put forward in Shearer's defence was that the referee did nothing at the time, making it, in that hackneyed phrase, 'trial by television'. But there has been trial by television for many years now, the FA taking cognisance of what the cameras show even if referees and linesmen – I'm sorry, referee's assistants, Heaven help us – have seen nowt and done nowt.

On the face of it, the FA's disciplinary commission simply sat on the fence. Predictable, perhaps, with the World Cup so close.



Amazing grace...Shearer's let-off was astonishing

Posture, principle and practice

WHAT OF the new celebrated Mrs Eileen Drewery? At once I declare an interest. I am married to a healer, I believe in the power of healing, I could cite many instances of cures that have been effected.

Indeed it is highly significant that many GPs now choose to work with healers in their surgeries. Which is as much as to say that far from being sceptical of Mrs Drewery's healing powers, I'm perfectly happy to believe that they exist.

What has appalled me, and, I know, many healers, is the way she has made such self-aggrandising claims. Her "one-to-ones with God". Her preposterous assertion that she, through the intervention of the Almighty, "stopped" Ian Wright from scoring for England against Italy in Rome, for fear of the violence that might have ensued.

Modesty plainly is not among Mrs Drewery's virtues, whatever her healing powers. Besides, healers will tell you that they are mere conduits for energies which they can merely elicit and direct to their patients.

Mrs Drewery's public posture has done no good to the cause of healing and though Hoddle has denied it, there surely must be implicit if unstated pressure on members of the England squad to avail themselves of her talents. In principle, I am sure this is a good thing, but in practice – as we have deduced from certain anonymous statements – it can provoke resistance.

Hoddle should have stopped Mrs Drewery from talking to the press and making her grandiose statements. For her own good, for the team's good and above all, for the good of healing.

SPORTSPAGES
THE SPECIALIST SPORTS BOOKSHOP

Europe's Leading Sports Bookshop
with branches in London & Manchester

We carry a range of books, magazines, fanzines, & videos exclusively devoted to sport

FOOTBALL IS OUR SPECIALITY

We have a worldwide mail order service
and now
WE'RE ON THE WEB

You can order direct from the largest fully searchable database of football books & videos in Europe

just visit us at
www.sportspages.co.uk
to find out more
or
call in at

CAXTON WALK
94-96 CHARING CROSS ROAD
LONDON WC2H 0JG
TEL: 0171 240 9604
FAX: 0171 836 0104

BARTON SQUARE
ST ANN'S SQUARE
MANCHESTER M2 7HA
TEL: 0161 832 8530
FAX: 0161 832 9391

9.30AM - 7.00PM MON - SAT 9.30AM - 6.00PM
OPENING HOURS

e-mail football@sportspages.co.uk

FRANCE 98 THE DRAW

FRANCE 98
COUPE DU MONDE

GROUP A
Brazil
Scotland
Morocco
Norway

GROUP B
Italy
Chile
Cameroon
Austria

GROUP C
France
South Africa
Saudi Arabia
Denmark

GROUP D
Spain
Nigeria
Paraguay
Bulgaria

GROUP E
Holland
Belgium
South Korea
Mexico

GROUP F
Germany
USA
Yugoslavia
Iran

GROUP G
Romania
Colombia
England
Tunisia

GROUP H
Argentina
Japan
Jamaica
Croatia

All times British Summer Time

	FIRST ROUND											
	WEDNESDAY 10/06	THURSDAY 11/06	FRIDAY 12/06	SATURDAY 13/06	SUNDAY 14/06	MONDAY 15/06	TUESDAY 16/06	WEDNESDAY 17/06	THURSDAY 18/06	FRIDAY 19/06	SATURDAY 20/06	SUNDAY 21/06
Saint-Denis	Group A Brazil v Scotland 4.30pm			Group E Holland v Belgium 8pm					Group C France v Saudi Arabia 8pm			
Paris						Group F Germany v USA 8pm				Group D Nigeria v Bulgaria 4.30pm		Group H Argentina v Jamaica 4.30pm
Lens			Group C Saudi Arabia v Denmark 4.30pm		Group H Jamaica v Croatia 8pm							Group F Germany v Yugoslavia 1.30pm
Lyon				Group E South Korea v Mexico 4.30pm		Group G Romania v Colombia 4.30pm						Group F USA v Iran 8pm
Saint-Etienne					Group F Yugoslavia v Iran 4.30pm			Group B Chile v Austria 4.30pm		Group D Spain v Paraguay 8pm		
Marseille			Group C France v South Africa 8pm			Group G England v Tunisia 1.30pm					Group E Holland v South Korea 8pm	
Montpellier	Group A Morocco v Norway 8pm		Group D Paraguay v Bulgaria 1.30pm					Group B Italy v Cameroon 8pm				
Toulouse		Group B Cameroon v Austria 8pm			Group H Argentina v Japan 1.30pm				Group C South Africa v Denmark 4.30pm			
Bordeaux		Group B Italy v Chile 4.30pm					Group A Scotland v Norway 4.30pm				Group E Belgium v Mexico 4.30pm	
Nantes				Group D Spain v Nigeria 1.30pm			Group A Brazil v Morocco 8pm				Group H Japan v Croatia 1.30pm	

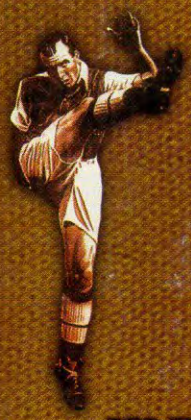
	SECOND ROUND					QUARTER-FINALS		SEMI-FINALS		THIRD-PLACE PLAY-OFF	FINAL
	SATURDAY 27/06	SUNDAY 28/06	MONDAY 29/06	TUESDAY 30/06	FRIDAY 03/07	SATURDAY 04/07	TUESDAY 07/07	WEDNESDAY 08/07	SATURDAY 11/07	SUNDAY 12/07
		Game 4 Group D 1st v Group C 2nd 8pm			Game 6 Game 2 winner v Game 3 winner 3.30pm			Game 8 winner v Game 0 winner 8pm		FINAL 8pm
	Game 1 Group A 1st v Group B 2nd 8pm								Third-place play-off 8pm	
		Game 3 Group C 1st v Group D 2nd 3.30pm								
						Game 0 Game 6 winner v Game 7 winner 8pm				
				Game 8 Group H 1st v Group G 2nd 8pm						
	Game 2 Group B 1st v Group A 2nd 3.30pm					Game C Game 5 winner v Game 8 winner 3.30pm		Game A winner v Game C winner 8pm		
			Game 6 Group F 1st v Group E 2nd 3.30pm							
			Game 5 Group E 1st v Group F 2nd 8pm							
				Game 7 Group G 1st v Group H 2nd 3.30pm						
					Game A Game 1 winner v Game 4 winner 8pm					

1966-67 AND ALL THAT!

THERE ARE CERTAIN MOMENTS IN A NATION'S HERITAGE THAT WILL BE FOREVER TREASURED BY IT'S PEOPLE. SO IT WAS THAT ON THE GREEN FIELDS OF WEMBLEY TWO NATIONS HAD THEIR FINEST HOUR. IN 1966 BOBBY MOORE LIFTED THE JULES RIMET TROPHY, THREE LIONS AND THE CLASSIC RED SHIRTS FOREVER REMEMBERED.
TWELVE MONTHS ON AND THE FINEST SCOTTISH SIDE EVER RUBBED ENGLAND'S NOSES INTO THE TURF, AS THE FAMOUS DARK BLUE SHIRTS OF BAXTER, LAW ET AL PLAYED ENGLAND OFF THE PARK.

WILL THOSE GLORY DAYS RETURN?

WHO WILL FILL THE SHIRTS?



TOFFS®

100% NOSTALGIA GUARANTEED

The Old Fashioned Football Shirt Company

NEVER GIVE UP ON TRADITION - 100% COTTON FOOTBALL SHIRTS

FOR FREE COLOUR BROCHURE OF OVER 400 DIFFERENT SHIRTS PLEASE WRITE TO:
THE OLD FASHIONED FOOTBAL SHIRT COMPANY PO BOX 71 GATESHEAD NE11 0UZ
OR PHONE 0044 (0)191 491 3400/3500 FAX 0044 (0)191 491 3305
E.MAIL: ENQUIRIES@T.O.F.F.S.octacon.co.uk URL: http://www.zebra.co.uk/toffs/